

THE OFFICIAL STRATEGY GUIDE

HEROES III

of Might and Magic®

EXPANSION PACK

THE PRICE OF LOYALTY

INCLUDES
MAPS AND
BRIEFINGS FOR
EXPANSION PACK
SCENARIOS AND
CAMPAIGNS!



NEW WORLD COMPUTING®

Joe Grant Bell
Michael Knight
Rod Harten

HEROES II[®] of Might and Magic

THE PRICE OF LOYALTY



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INTRODUCTION

Heroes of Might and Magic II typifies the old adage, "A minute to learn, a lifetime to master."

Well, okay, we exaggerate. It won't take you a lifetime to master the game. But the fact remains that **Heroes of Might and Magic II** possesses far more depth and subtlety than its incredible graphics and easy interface would suggest. That makes it great territory for a book such as this, which plumbs the murky depths of its strategy and game mechanics, unearthing the best techniques for the weary hero.

Of course, that very depth also poses a problem: We can't reduce the game to a simple set of winning formulas. Instead of quick-win strategies, therefore, this book offers you tons of useful information, tips and techniques, in an effort to give you a comprehensive understanding of the game. We think you'll agree that it's more satisfying to really learn about a game and beat it honestly than to defeat it with a few quick cheats. Of course, if cheats are what you want, we do have a little something that might interest you in the back of the book...

Heroes of Might and Magic II is a fascinating game with nearly limitless replay value. The advice and information in this book will help improve your chances against its devastatingly effective computerized opponents and, ideally, help you squeeze even more entertainment out of an already outstanding product. Read on, and enjoy your stay in the realms of Might and Magic!



CHAPTER 1

Overview of Heroes of Might and Magic II

Before you plunge headlong into the deceptively pleasant waters of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**, you should know a few things about its underlying mechanics—the options available to you, how the game is won, how your final score is calculated, and the skills you need to succeed. Let's take a brief look at these issues.

PLAY MODES: STANDARD, CAMPAIGN, MULTIPLAYER

Heroes of Might and Magic II's Multiplayer mode allows you to compete against your friends or team up with them to fight the computer. Standard game mode lets you pick a scenario from a list, then duke it out with a number of computer-controlled opponents. Finally, Campaign mode has you fight your way through a series of scenarios to (hoped-for) ultimate victory. Each of the campaign's two sides is a campaign unto itself: You can choose to fight for all that is good, or to walk the winding road of evil.

WINNING THE GAME

There are several ways to win **Heroes of Might and Magic II**—and several ways to lose. Some scenarios require you to crush your enemies; some task you to capture a specific castle or defeat a certain hero. Accumulating wealth or finding a legendary artifact make for victory in still other scenarios.

Defeat, too, can occur in a variety of ways. Losing a specific castle or hero often will mean your downfall. Some scenarios force you to race the clock.

That's a lot to keep track of, but don't worry: In the last few chapters of this book we'll examine strategies for beating each scenario type.

YOUR FINAL SCORE

In Campaign mode, your score is based entirely on how long it takes you to win a scenario. In Standard and Multiplayer games, however, your score is the product of how long it took you to win and the mission's difficulty rating.

Each map has a built-in difficulty setting, and each difficulty setting comes with certain percentages. As you'll notice in Table 1-1, a map with Normal difficulty gives you a base score of 100 percent, so your final score is

the time it took you to beat the scenario (the faster, the better) multiplied by 100. If the scenario you just beat was Easy, however, you'll get only 80 percent as many points.

Table 1-1. Scenario Difficulty Ratings

Built-In Map Difficulty	Base Score
Easy	80%
Normal	100%
Hard	130%
Expert	160%
Impossible	190%

Built-in scenario difficulty isn't the only factor to consider. You can adjust each scenario's base difficulty using the Game Difficulty settings (they look like chess pieces in Figure 1-1) on the Scenario Selection screen. Table 1-2 shows the effects of these difficulty settings.



Figure 1-1. The chess pieces at the top of the screen adjust the game difficulty level.

Table 1-2. The Effects of Difficulty Adjustments

Difficulty Setting	Percentage Modifier
Easy	-30
Normal	0
Hard	+20
Expert	+40
Impossible	+60

As the table shows, the difficulty setting you choose can affect your point total greatly. Enabling the Easy difficulty setting on a Normal map gives you 70 percent of the points you'd receive playing at the Normal difficulty level. Playing a Normal map at the Impossible difficulty level, however, gives you 130 percent of the points you'd get at Normal difficulty.

We provide these tables only to appease your curiosity. Don't get too worked up over your final score. Some players love high scores, while others are content just to win the scenarios. Either way is perfectly fine, though you'll have to become a real master if you want to squeeze the best possible scores out of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. We suggest you take it easy until you really master the game—and then shoot for the highest scores.

SUCCEEDING IN HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC II

What do you need to succeed in **Heroes of Might and Magic II**? That's a tough question. You can't expect to keep all the statistics and ratings in your head. However, reading and digesting the information in this book and playing the game again and again will help you develop an "instinct" for how the game works. Both elements are necessary: You won't improve if you don't practice, and you'll have a much harder time improving if you don't consider the specifics we provide here.

Here's a brief look at what you need to know, and where in the book to find each topic.

Know Your Heroes

Picking a hero is one of the first actions you'll take in **Heroes of Might and Magic II**, and it's one of the most important. Your choice of heroes affects everything from your combat ability to the resources you must gather. Chapter 2 provides an in-depth look at the hero classes, explaining the strengths and

weaknesses of each and giving you a good sense of how each hero develops over time. If that's not enough, Chapter 3 gives you the straight facts on each hero's castle type, explaining which castles are easiest to develop and which are hardest, which are most costly and which provide the best creatures.

Understand the World

Chapter 4 provides an exhaustive list of every monster in the game, along with tables comparing each creature's abilities. Chapter 5 contains a roster of every artifact and Adventure screen locale you could possibly find. Finally, Chapter 8 examines the spells you'll encounter as you travel the lands of "Might and Magic."

Develop a Grand Strategy

Chapter 6 offers basic rules and stratagems to guide you through every scenario. You can attack every challenge in *Heroes of Might and Magic II* with a standard set of adventurer's tricks—and Chapter 6 gives you some of the best.

Become a Master Combatant

While Chapter 6 helps you navigate the strategic level of the game, Chapter 7 illustrates the mechanics of individual battles and discusses a range of tactics that will get you the best results in those battles. While tactical combat in *Heroes of Might and Magic II* initially might seem simple—even simplistic—you'll be surprised at the difference subtle tactical decisions can make.

Know the Land

After digesting all the information from the early chapters of this book, you may still find some individual scenarios daunting and difficult. That's why Part III (chapters 9 and 10) gives you tips and techniques for every campaign and stand-alone scenario in the game.

ONWARD!

Heroes of Might and Magic II seems simple at first glance, but the more you play it, the more you realize how very complicated it really is. Not only is it impossible to reliably predict your opponents' actions, but every map incorporates random elements: Treasures, resources, even castles can change with every scenario! This randomness and complexity makes it impossible for us to give you foolproof strategies for winning every scenario, especially at higher difficulty levels. The most we can do is give you as much useful information as we can, and provide you with a behind-the-scenes look at how the game works. From that point on, winning is up to you.

Some players might be disappointed at the lack of a "winning formula" for every scenario. But this is the game's beauty: No one can reduce **Heroes of Might and Magic II** to a set of simple instructions. It takes every ounce of forethought, planning, strategizing, and improvisation you can muster—not to mention a little luck—to defeat your opponents at the highest difficulty levels.

That's the essence of a great game.

Even in the absence of winning formulas, however, this book will teach you a lot about **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. Keep on reading, and get ready to win!



CHAPTER

2

The Book of Heroes

When most people think of strategy, they think of epic strategy—hundreds of units charging across a tumultuous battlefield, some in small bands and some in great masses. However, the focus of **Heroes of Might and Magic II** is much narrower. Instead of hundreds of units, usually you'll find yourself commanding just a few strong armies. And at the center of those armies, you'll always find a powerful hero. The "Heroes of Might and Magic" are larger than life, and have a profound impact on the course of battle. This chapter takes a close look at the six hero types and the strengths and weaknesses, perquisites and obstacles attending each.

OBTAINING HEROES

You'll always start the game with a single hero. Unless you've opted to play a campaign or a highly restrictive scenario, you're free from the start to choose any hero type. You may purchase new heroes during the course of the game for 2,500 gold pieces, as well. These heroes can be of any class; nothing says you must stick with Knights or Barbarians just because your primary hero happens to be a Knight or Barbarian.

However, **Heroes of Might and Magic II** gives you little incentive to diversify. Selecting heroes of the same class over and over simplifies the game: By sticking with a single class, you'll always know your heroes' strengths and weaknesses—no need to shift gears switching from Knight to Necromancer. More importantly, however, having a single class of heroes lets you capitalize fully on the structures you build. If you go with a horde of Barbarians, you can skimp on Mage Guilds with no regrets. For an army of Warlocks, build your Mage Guilds as high as they'll go, and rest assured each hero will partake fully of their benefits.

That said, feel free to take as many different hero types as you like. If you're doing just fine with a wide range of heroes, then good for you! If you're losing consistently, however, you might want to consider picking similar heroes for efficiency's sake.

Always start the game with a hero you feel comfortable with. This hero determines your starting castle and sets the tone of the game. When buying additional heroes, wait awhile if you don't like the current selection; two new faces appear at the beginning of every week, and may offer a hero you like better.

GENERAL HERO CHARACTERISTICS

Each hero has several distinctive characteristics, visible from the Hero screen (see Figure 2-1). Some, like the hero's portrait and crest, have no bearing on the game. Others, like the hero's morale, luck, experience, and spell points, can vary wildly and change frequently over the course of a scenario. A hero's most important characteristics are his or her skills. There are two varieties, primary and secondary, and both skill types improve as the hero gains levels.



Figure 2-1. A Typical Hero Screen

SUMMARY OF PRIMARY SKILLS

Primary skills make up your hero's core statistics. To a large extent, these skills define what a hero is. Table 2-1 shows each hero's starting primary skills; Table 2-2 gives the probabilities of each hero class advancing primary skills when gaining levels.

Table 2-1. Primary Skills Table

Skill	Barbarian	Knight	Necromancer	Sorceress	Warlock	Wizard
Attack	3	2	1	0	0	0
Defense	1	2	0	0	0	1
Power	1	1	2	2	3	2
Knowledge	1	1	2	3	2	2

Table 2-2. Primary Skill Advancement

This table shows the likelihood of each hero improving a given skill when he or she gains a level. Every hero gains one point in one of four primary skills every time he or she attains a new level—it's just a matter of which.

As the table illustrates, heroes usually specialize in one or two skills until they reach Level 10, when they have a good chance to advance in all four primary skills.

Hero Type and Level	Attack	Defense	Power	Knowledge
Barbarian 2-9	55%	35%	5%	5%
Barbarian 10+	30%	30%	20%	20%
Knight 2-9	35%	45%	10%	10%
Knight 10+	25%	25%	25%	25%
Necromancer 2-9	15%	15%	35%	35%
Necromancer 10+	25%	25%	25%	25%
Sorceress 2-9	10%	10%	30%	50%
Sorceress 10+	20%	20%	30%	30%
Warlock 2-9	10%	10%	50%	30%
Warlock 10+	20%	20%	30%	30%
Wizard 2-9	10%	10%	40%	40%
Wizard 10+	20%	20%	30%	30%

Necromancers tend to develop the widest array of skills, while Barbarians are the most focused, concentrating so much on Attack (and, to a lesser degree, Defense) that spellcasting is almost out of the question.



Attack Skill

The Barbarian starts with the greatest Attack skill of any hero, and continues to develop a higher Attack rating than anyone else. All creatures and heroes have this skill; when creatures travel in a hero's army, the hero's Attack skill

accrues to the creatures' Attack skill. This helps explain why creatures traveling with a strong hero are so much more powerful than those left alone in a castle.

Occasionally you might forget about the effects of Attack and Defense skills, and lose a battle because you failed to take into account the Attack bonuses of an enemy hero. Don't make this mistake; when considering an army's power, whether friend or foe, be sure to include that army's hero power in your calculations.



Defense Skill

Just as each hero and creature has an Attack skill, each creature and hero also has a Defense skill. And just as the hero's Attack skill accrues to that of the creatures in his army, so does his Defense skill. Knights typically are the best defensive heroes.

While a potent offense is indeed useful, strong Defense is equally important. When defending a castle during a siege, Defense skill allows your minions to withstand missile fire while your own turrets pick apart the enemy. And while traveling across the Adventure Map, an army with strong defense doesn't need to scurry home for extra troops very often: Its existing troops are likely to endure many battles.



Spell Power

Spell Power, the principal skill of the Warlock, affects the strength and duration of spells cast by the hero. For spells that deal damage, Spell Power determines how much; for spells that last a limited time, Spell Power determines how long.

As a hero's Spell Power reaches higher and higher values, the spells become more and more devastating. This is the big payoff for a spellcasting hero, who must struggle early in the game but becomes very powerful when he consolidates his resources and gains a few levels.



Knowledge

Knowledge skill helps determine a hero's spell point total: Multiply the Knowledge skill by 10 to arrive at the hero's maximum spell points.

Spell points are just as useful as Spell Power. With high power but few spell points, a spellcaster commands great force but can only wield it a few times per battle.

SUMMARY OF SECONDARY SKILLS

In addition to his or her primary attributes, each hero has a number of secondary skills. Although undeniably less pivotal than primary attributes, don't dismiss the value of secondary skills. A high-level hero with multiple secondary skills is truly a force to reckon with; by choosing the right secondary skills for your hero, you can shore up your kingdom's most obvious weaknesses or further improve your hero's strengths.

A hero may have up to eight secondary skills. Each ranks at one of three levels—Basic, Advanced, or Expert. When your hero advances a level, you may choose a secondary skill for him or her from two possibilities. Table 2-3 gives the probabilities of a given hero type learning each secondary skill. The higher the number, the more likely it is that the character class will learn that skill.

Table 2-3. Secondary Skills

Skill	Barbarian	Knight	Necromancer	Sorceress	Warlock	Wizard
Archery	3	2	1	3	1	1
Ballistics	3	4	3	3	3	3
Diplomacy	2	3	2	2	2	2
Eagle Eye	1	1	3	2	3	3
Estates	2	3	2	2	2	2
Leadership	3	5	0	1	1	2
Logistics	3	3	2	2	2	2
Luck	2	1	1	3	1	2
Mysticism	1	1	3	3	3	4
Navigation	3	2	2	4	2	2
Necromancy	0	0	5	0	1	0
Pathfinding	4	3	3	2	2	2
Scouting	4	2	1	1	4	2
Wisdom	1	2	4	4	5	5

THE HERO ROSTER

Let's look at each hero type class by class. As you read, bear in mind that **Heroes of Might and Magic II** is extremely well-balanced, and no one hero class is supremely powerful or completely useless. The best hero for each game is partly a function of the scenario you play and partly a function of your playing style.



Barbarian

Hailing from the dusty plains, the Barbarian emphasizes speed and power over defense. Barbarians and Knights are both great warriors, but Barbarians have lower defense values and thus are slightly less suited to long-term campaigns and castle defense. However, if allowed to get in the first strike, a

Barbarian's attack-heavy units often can turn the tide of battle with a single blow. Also, Barbarians make good secondary heroes, as their great mobility allows them to scour the battlefield quickly, picking up treasures and bonuses with impunity. Even first-level Barbarians possess the Advanced Pathfinding secondary skill.

Barbarian castles are the easiest to build of any hero's castles, so despite the relative weakness of Barbarian troops, low operating costs and quick offensive punch make the Barbarian a tough competitor on small maps.

Total Barbarian Dwelling Costs:

20,300 Gold, 25 Wood, 65 Ore, 20 Crystals

Summary

Barbarians make great primary heroes on small maps, but their castles are vulnerable in prolonged games. Furthermore, Barbarians' lack of Defense skill renders Barbarian troops susceptible to enemy offensive spells and fast opponents. In prolonged games, Barbarians must load up on fast creatures that can get in the first strike in combat and capitalize on the Barbarian hero's remarkable Attack skill. Because Barbarian troops as a class are not that fast, the Barbarian should build his army from other heroes' castles whenever possible.

Barbarians are ideal as scouts and resource collectors on maps of all sizes. Give them only the fastest troops, and their superior mobility lets them repossess mines and resource producers that other players have claimed, meanwhile keeping a safe distance from the most powerful enemy heroes.



Knight

For many players, the Knight is the easiest hero to win the game with, especially on small to medium-sized maps. Knights are lords of feudal castles, where lowly Peasants are slowly trained to be Pikemen, then Swordsmen,

Cavalry, and finally Paladins. These Knight units aren't particularly strong compared to other heroes', and the Knight has no unit that compares with Dragons or Titans. However, Knight units are extremely affordable and versatile, so you can usually assemble them in great hordes for effective attacks.

Of course, the Knight isn't limited to using troops from his own castle. Troops from any castle can be powerful when assembled under a strong Knight, because the Knight's extraordinary Attack and Defense ratings make everyone under his command perform at a higher level.

Knight Dwelling Costs:

25,200 Gold, 80 Wood, 25 Ore, 30 Crystals

Summary of Knights

Knights are arguably the easiest heroes to win the game with; they're especially good in the game's early stages and on small to medium-sized maps. Knights' toughness improves their troops without spells. This means you can cut costs on Mage Guilds; these can be quite costly and require lots of exotic resources you may or may not have access to at the start of the game.

Furthermore, although individual Knight units aren't as powerful as many other creatures, they do have great toughness, making them extremely hard to kill when they serve under a high-level Knight.



Necromancer

Necromancers are spellcasters who specialize in death magic. They start the game with rather mundane primary abilities, but are the only hero type likely to develop the Necromancy secondary skill. (Actually, they're one of only two heroes who even have a chance to get that particular skill.) They also begin the game with basic Wisdom, a vital skill for any serious spellcasting hero.

Necromancer abilities, creatures, and costs fall somewhere in the middle

of the hero spectrum. Their castles are not too cheap but not too expensive; their creatures are not too weak but not excessively powerful; Necromancers themselves aren't dominant in any particular skill, yet they can be useful heroes for a variety of tasks. Necromancers typically flourish on medium-sized maps, where their biggest creatures (Vampires and Bone Dragons) dominate, and Dragons and Titans are rare.

Necromancer Dwelling Costs:

29,400 Gold, 25 Wood, 40 Ore, 15 Crystals, 15 Gems,
20 Sulfur, 5 Mercury

Summary

The Necromancer combines good value and good power. For the most part, your style of play will dictate his value: Some players prefer heroes with a real slant toward one discipline or another, while others prefer a well-rounded and versatile hero, which the Necromancer definitely is. Highly specialized heroes like the Barbarian allow you to pursue a certain strategy to the extreme; in the Barbarian's case, that strategy involves early, rapid expansion. But well-balanced heroes like the Necromancer allow you to successfully pursue a more reactive style of play: You can base strategies on the situations you face rather than on your primary hero's inherent strengths and weaknesses.

**Sorceress**

A denizen of the forest, the Sorceress is a "pure" spellcaster who starts the game with good Spell Power and Knowledge, but no Attack or Defense skills. Instead of focusing on raw power, the Sorceress emphasizes Knowledge, gaining enough spell points to cast a wide array of spells. This focus on Knowledge is neither better nor worse than the focus of the power-hungry Warlock. There are times when you'll go crazy wishing you had just a few more points of power, but there are also times you'll go crazy wishing you had a few spell points left.

The Sorceress's emphasis on skills over power extends to her creatures as well. They tend to deal good damage and possess good special abilities, but aren't very tough. This lack of toughness can make it difficult to use a Sorceress as your primary, world-conquering hero. However, like all spellcasters, Sorceresses gain tremendous amounts of power as they gain levels, and Sorceress castles and troops rank among the cheapest and easiest to purchase.

Sorceress Dwelling Costs:

23,000 Gold, 30 Wood, 40 Ore, 25 Mercury, 10 Gems

Summary

Depending on how you look at it, the Sorceress is either a great bargain or a poor excuse for a spellcaster. It's true that the other spellcasters have better creatures than the Sorceress, but there's no denying that her minimal costs and cheap but respectable creatures can get her off to a great start.

If you play a Sorceress as your primary hero, you'll need to take advantage of her rapid castle-building and fast creature production by taking over enemy castles as soon as possible. Some people love that style of play, while others prefer a slower, more conservative approach. Those players usually are better off playing our next hero—the Warlock.



Warlock

Like the Sorceress, the mountain-dwelling Warlock is also a "pure" spellcaster who focuses almost exclusively on Spell Power and Knowledge. Unlike the Sorceress, the Warlock emphasizes Power. Warlocks are more likely than Sorceresses to run out of spell points in the middle of a battle, but the spells they do cast can last a very long time and produce powerful effects, indeed. Over the long haul, this makes them the better spellcasters; sure, they can't cast as many spells as a Sorceress, but the spells they cast can alter the course of battle profoundly.

Unlike the Sorceress's finesse troops, the Warlock's troops are largely big, tough brawlers. Some of these units suffer a lack of speed, but in general they make a great assault force. In fact, it isn't a stretch to say that the Warlock's creatures are the game's toughest.

Warlock Dwelling Costs:

37,500 Gold, 50 Ore, 15 Gems, 50 Sulfur

Summary

Kings of the large battlefield, Warlocks are both powerful and fun to play. Their only real drawback is the time and resources they need to develop their castles, but most players agree it's a small price to pay for such powerful creatures and potent spellcasting ability.

Warlocks make excellent superheroes, and their creatures are ideal for campaigning heroes of any type. With their great speed and strength, Warlock troops make a great addition to any army.



Wizard

Wizards feature a good mix of Spell Power and Knowledge, with some Defense for good measure. Their troops emphasize long-range attacks, and, in fact, can grow to be the game's best corps of long-range attackers. This is both a plus and a minus: Long-range troops have certain obvious advantages over close-combat troops, but they're also more fragile. Nevertheless, Wizard troops rank among the best in the game—especially when used correctly.

Wizard Dwelling Costs:

39,700 Gold, 30 Wood, 25 Ore, 10 Mercury, 45 Gems, 5 Sulfur

Summary

Wizards are much like Warlocks—spellcasters with vast potential but wobbly early careers. At normal difficulty levels, the Wizard's castle is a bit easier to develop than the Warlock's, because the Wizard's resource needs are somewhat more varied, and the beginning player starts with a variety of resources.

Many players find Warlocks easier to play than Wizards, mainly because of their superior troops. But Wizards aren't far behind in terms of power, especially when they develop their castles to the point where Titans are readily available.



CHAPTER 3

A Guide to Towns and Castles

As your heroes scour the lands of Might and Magic, they'll encounter all manner of strange and wondrous locales. No matter how useful or fascinating these places may prove, however, the mundane castle is more important.

Control of towns and castles is the game's most important aspect; you can usually measure your progress by how many of them you possess. This chapter explores the castles of each hero type—features common to all and characteristics particular to each.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CASTLES

Although towns are indeed useful, castles reign supreme in **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. Why are they so important? The answer is simple: Castles are a **self-sufficient, defensible** source of **gold and troops**. Each of these qualities is extremely important. Let's look at them in turn.

First, castles are self-sufficient and defensible. They generate creatures you may recruit for castle defense, and may contain structures (such as moats and turrets) that make defense easier. Add a hero or captain of the guard, and the castle becomes even tougher. No other structure on the Adventure screen possesses these qualities.

Towns produce creatures to a limited extent, but they don't produce enough high-quality creatures to prevail against a determined foe. You can defend resource producers such as mines and lumber mills, but only by keeping a hero nearby; in other words, they aren't self-sufficient. Castles, on the other hand, have the resources to hold their own indefinitely against enemy heroes.

Of course, having a self-sufficient and defensible castle would be pointless unless the castle actually did something useful for you. Well, believe us, it **does**. Castles are the game's most reliable sources of gold and creatures, producing 1000 Gold per turn (as opposed to a town's 250) and a new batch of creatures every week. You can get gold from other resources, but those resources are spotty at best. Unless a hero baby-sits a gold mine, your enemies will take it; treasure chests provide only a one-time supply of gold (more useful as experience points, anyway); gold-producing artifacts and skills (such as Estates) appear too infrequently to rely on. Similarly, although you may recruit creatures from wandering armies or special locations, you can't count on these locations for a constant flow of troops. Only castles can adequately serve these two necessary functions.

Castles are so vital, in fact, that you can't win the game consistently unless you quickly establish a number of castles equal or nearly equal to your toughest foe's. If your opponent has several more castles than you and manages to hold them for several weeks, you'll find yourself forced into a losing situation.

Defeating his armies becomes pointless, because he can replace his troops much more quickly than you with his abundant gold and creature resources. Eventually the constant fighting will wear you down, and the sheer numbers will overwhelm you.

COMMON ASPECTS OF TOWNS AND CASTLES

You may not build new structures in a town that hasn't been upgraded to a castle. Therefore, your first priority when you secure a town should be to upgrade it. This process costs 5000 Gold, 20 Wood, and 20 Ore. This can seem exorbitant, but consider that a castle produces 1000 Gold per day, and you'll see the truth of the matter: A castle pays for itself in five days, so you can't afford **not** to upgrade your towns.

While castles belonging to different hero classes have many differences, all share a few similar buildings. Here's a look at those similar structures and their functions, with notes on the most valuable. Note that you'll need some of these buildings to construct other buildings, so while you might not want to bother building a Well or a Tavern, you might end up building them anyway to get the structures you really want.

Bonus Effect Buildings

Bonus Effect Buildings are present in every hero's castle. These buildings have different costs and effects depending on the sort of castle they're in. Knights' Fortifications make the walls hard to penetrate; the Barbarian Coliseum augments defender morale by 2; Sorceress castles' Rainbow bestows 2 points of good luck on all defenders; the Wizard Library gives extra spells to the Mage Guild; the Warlock Dungeon adds 500 Gold per week to the hero's treasury, and Necromancers' Storm augments the Spell Power of defending heroes (+2).

Of these buildings, the Dungeon and Library provide the most tangible benefits, with Fortifications not far behind. The Coliseum, Storm, and Rainbow can often be skipped.

Captain's Quarters

Each castle may have a Captain of the Guard. Captains are sort of like miniature heroes who can't leave the castle they're stationed in. They're never as effective as a true hero, but then again, they don't cost as much, either. Every castle should have either a Captain of the Guard or a hero permanently stationed there. If you have the money to spare, a low-level Knight is often your best bet, but if gold is tight, or you're having trouble keeping track of all your heroes, then a Captain of the Guard usually will do.

Horde Buildings

So-called Horde Buildings cause the lowest-level creatures in your castle to grow at +8. For example, instead of receiving 8 Goblins per week, you'll receive 16 when you build a Garbage Heap. The various Horde Buildings are:

Barbarian: Garbage Heap

Knight: Farm

Necromancer: Skull Pyramid

Sorceress: Crystal Garden

Warlock: Haystack

Wizard: Orchard

Horde buildings can be useful or useless depending on the sort of castle you own and how powerful your lowest-level creatures are. For Knights, Horde Buildings are hardly worth the effort; Peasants are next to worthless. For Necromancers, however, Horde buildings can be very productive, as Skeletons are very respectable low-level troops.

Mage Guild

The Mage Guild is a valuable addition to every castle, regardless of what hero type inhabits it. Every hero benefits from having a few spells. Because heroes never forget the spells they've learned, you often can build a Mage

Guild in just one castle and have all your heroes visit it. This saves the expense of constructing multiple Mage Guilds.

You can get away with neglecting the Mage Guild completely for a little while, but even if you've got a Knight or Barbarian, you can't ignore it forever. If your heroes are spellcasters, then you'll need to get a Level 2 or 3 Mage Guild as soon as humanly possible!

Marketplace

A Marketplace allows you to trade one sort of resource for another, usually at outrageous exchange rates. The more Marketplaces you buy, the better the exchange rates are.

In general you should try to acquire resources "the old-fashioned way"—by conquering mines and structures of the appropriate type. Only build Marketplaces if this strategy isn't feasible, or you really need a lot of one particular resource. Also, the exchange rate increases with each Marketplace, maxing out at nine marketplaces.

Moat

Moats slow down enemy troops. They're much like Turrets: They can be useful in castle defense, but you shouldn't purchase them instead of more important structures. Worry about building a Moat after you've built everything else, or when you lack the resources to build the stuff you **really** want to build.

Moats are most useful when your defending army has lots of long-range attackers. If you don't plan on having many of those troop types in your castle, then a Moat just delays the inevitable.

Statue

Statues provide an extra 250 Gold per turn. That's like having an extra town under your control! Gold is a key resource in **Heroes of Might and Magic II**,

so you can't afford not to build a Statue in each castle you control. Don't be daunted by the initial cost. The Statue will pay for itself in five turns, everything after that is pure profit.

If your castle is in a position not to be harassed by enemies for a while, then a Statue should be one of the first things you build. However, if your castle is vulnerable, build creature dwellings first; worry about the Statue once the castle is secure.

Shipyard

Not surprisingly, Shipyards produce ships. Shipyards are useless in many scenarios, but invaluable in others. Determine the predominant terrain before building a Shipyard. If the battleground is mostly land, you'll feel awfully silly sailing your brand-new ship in a tiny pond.

In many scenarios, travel by water is profitable but not immediately necessary. In these scenarios, it's often best to consolidate your hold on local towns and castles, and wait for an enemy hero to arrive with a boat. If you can reach the boat while the enemy hero isn't in it, you'll be able to spare yourself the expense of building a Shipyard.

Tavern

Taverns provide a +1 Morale boost for your castle's defenders. This bonus is rarely enough to turn the tide of battle, especially if there's already a morale-affecting hero (such as a Knight) present. Therefore, consider Taverns mandatory only in castles requiring them for further growth—Knight castles and Sorceress castles.

Thieves' Guild

The Thieves' Guild provides you with information on the land and your opponents. The more Guilds you build, the more information you'll get. This information can be handy, but when push comes to shove and you're low on

resources, you're better off building essential structures first and worrying about the Thieves' Guild later. This means you'll usually end up building them in the middle stages of the game, when you have a significant number of castles and a good deal of gold on your hands.

You can acquire most Thieves' Guild information from your own experience and common sense. You'll find you need the Thieves' Guild less and less as you become more familiar with common patterns in the game.

Turrets

You can build two Turrets in each castle you own. Turrets do half as much damage as the Ballista that all castles are equipped with. In other words, Turrets are not terribly effective.

However, you should still build them after you complete all your vital structures. Just bear in mind that a good hero and lots of defending creatures are vastly more important than Turrets. Turrets can sometimes have an impact on the game's earliest castle sieges, but later attacks are guaranteed to be staged by tough, experienced heroes and high-level troops who'll hardly blink at a hail of Turret fire.

The moral of the story? Build Turrets when you've bought all the creatures you can possibly buy, and you've got the spare gold. In extremely close battles, they can sometimes make the difference between success and failure.

Well

A Well causes two extra creatures to appear in each of your castle's creature dwellings every week. This means a structure that normally produces eight creatures now produces 10.

The Well is a vital part of a solid castle. Aside from the fact that it's often a prerequisite for building further structures, it's an important part of the castle's offensive and defensive capabilities. Think of it this way: Two more Peasants per week is next to useless, but two more Paladins per week is

extremely helpful. The Well's effects really pay off when it comes to recruiting powerful, but rare, creatures such as Paladins, Bone Dragons, and so forth.

Always build a Well during your first week in a new castle.

Summary of Common Buildings

Table 3-1 summarizes the cost of all the "common" buildings we've just looked at.

Table 3-1. Common Structures, Costs and Effects

Structure	Gold	Wood	Ore	Crystals	Gems	Mercury	Sulfur
Captain Quarters	500	—	—	—	—	—	—
Castle	5000	20	20	—	—	—	—
Horde Building	1000	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mage Guild	2000	5	5	—	—	—	—
Mage Guild L2	1000	5	5	4	4	4	4
Mage Guild L3	1000	5	5	6	6	6	6
Mage Guild L4	1000	5	5	8	8	8	8
Mage Guild L5	1000	5	5	10	10	10	10
Marketplace	500	5	—	—	—	—	—
Shipyards	2000	20	—	—	—	—	—
Statue	1250	—	5	—	—	—	—
Thieves Guild	750	5	—	—	—	—	—
Tavern	500	5	—	—	—	—	—
Turret	1500	—	5	—	—	—	—
Well	500	—	—	—	—	—	—
Coliseum	2000	10	10	—	—	—	—
Dungeon	3000	5	10	—	—	—	—
Fortifications	1500	5	15	—	—	—	—
Library	1500	5	5	5	5	5	5
Perpetual Storm	1000	—	—	—	—	10	10
Rainbow	1500	—	—	10	—	—	—

CREATURE DWELLINGS

Each hero's castle hosts six specific creature dwellings, some of which you can upgrade. This section summarizes the costs of each type of dwelling, and the number of creatures each dwelling produces per week (not counting Bonus Effect Buildings such as the Well). We also provide a dependencies chart showing what structures you must build before you can purchase the castle's most advanced structures.

Chapter 4 features analyses of the creatures each dwelling produces.

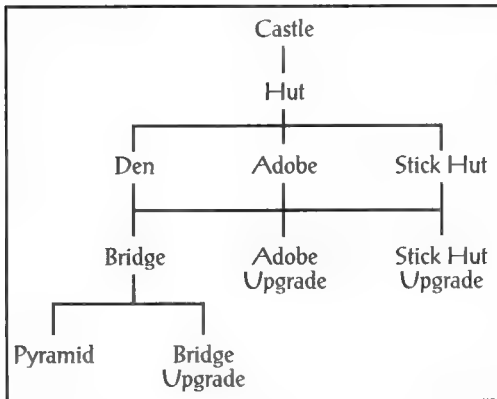
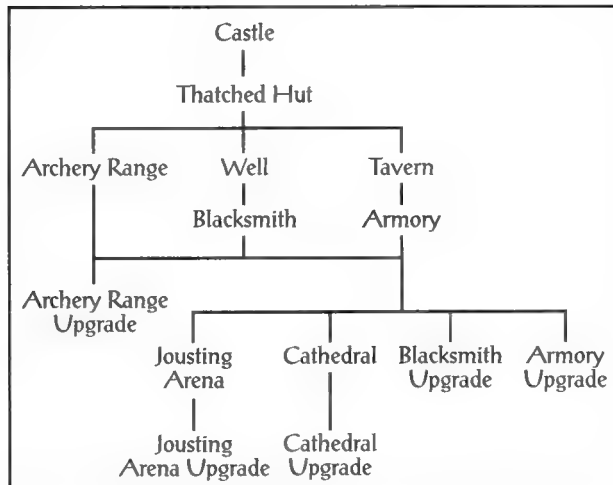


Figure 3-1. Barbarian Castle Dependency Chart

Barbarian Castles

You may purchase Barbarian creature dwellings with very few restrictions (see figure 3-1). No extraneous buildings such as Wells or Taverns are necessary to construct dwellings in the Barbarian castle. This adds to the castle's overall ease of construction.



Knight Castles

If you plan to build every dwelling in a Knight Castle, you'll need to build a Well and a Tavern (see Figure 3-2). This is not a major difficulty, however: Every castle should have a Well, and Taverns aren't very expensive. All things considered, Knight creature dwellings are quick and easy to construct.

Figure 3-2. Knight Castle Dependency Chart

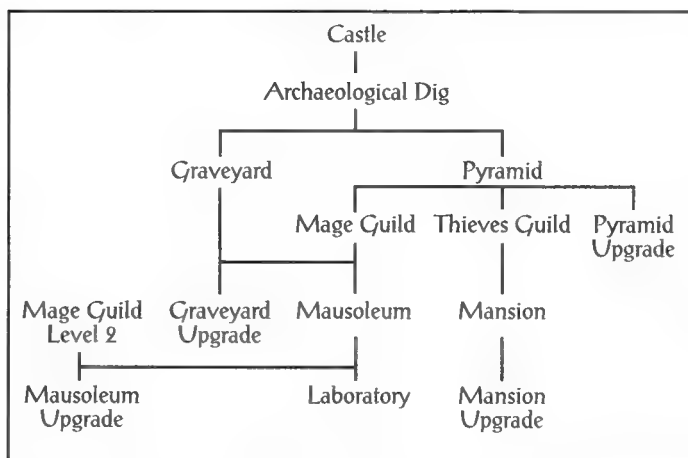


Figure 3-3. Necromancer Castle Dependency Chart

particular can be a problem, as it requires so many resources to construct. You can get around the problem by simply constructing a Level 1 Mage Guild and leaving the Mausoleum in its basic state. This means your Liches won't upgrade to Power Liches, but with a Level 1 Mage Guild, you're at least free to purchase a basic Mausoleum and the all-important Laboratory.

Necromancer Castles

Necromancer castles are deceptively hard to complete. As you can see from Figure 3-3, you need a Thieves' Guild before you can construct a Mansion, and you must build a Level 2 Mage Guild prior to purchasing an upgraded Mausoleum. The Level 2 Mage Guild in par-

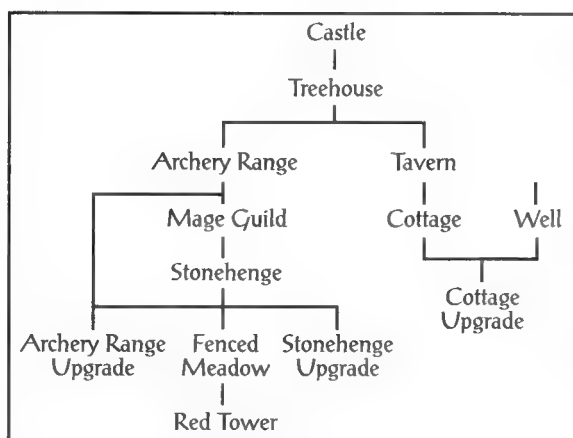


Figure 3-4. Sorceress Castle Dependency Chart

Sorceress Castles

Sorceress Castles are a bit more complicated than Knight castles, but like Knight castles, they require a Well and Tavern before you can construct every creature dwelling. As Figure 3-4 shows, they also require a Mage Guild. Fortunately for the Sorceress, however, there are no resource-intensive "stopper" buildings to interfere with building advanced creature dwellings: Only structures in the last tier require rare resources.

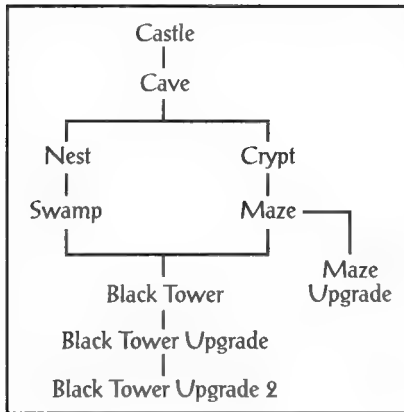


Figure 3-5. Warlock Castle
Dependency Chart

Warlock Castles

Warlock castles may be expensive, but as Figure 3-5 shows, the process of building a Warlock's creature dwellings is short and to the point. You must build Warlock creature dwellings in a very linear fashion, but on the plus side, no nondwelling structures like Taverns or Mage Guilds are required. Just keep building those creature dwellings until you're done! Now that's simplicity.

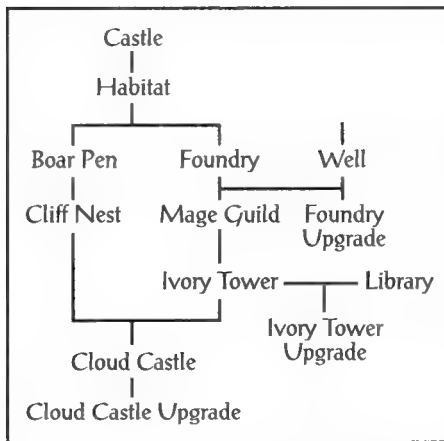


Figure 3-6. Wizard Castle
Dependency Chart

Wizard Castles

Wizard castles rank among the most difficult to fully construct. Why? For one thing, completing the full roster of creature dwellings requires a Well, a Library, and a Mage Guild. More importantly, the Ivory Tower and Library are both resource intensive—and as Figure 3-6 illustrates, if you don't build those structures, you can never get the Upgraded Ivory Tower or Cloud Castle. This makes it tough for Wizards to get their highest-level creatures, and presents you with a real challenge if your primary castle is a Wizard castle.

SUMMARY OF CREATURE DWELLING COSTS

Now we'll summarize building costs for each creature dwelling in the six castle types. These charts, and especially the Bottom Line tallying the total cost of building every creature dwelling and upgrade, should give you a good sense of the relative costs of each hero's castle. Use these charts as guides to which heroes have the easiest and most difficult castles to develop, and to the resources you must conquer to develop your castles fully.

Bear in mind that these charts don't include the costs of peripheral structures such as Mage Guilds.

Table 3-2: Barbarian Dwelling Costs

Building Type	Gold Cost	Resource Cost
Hut	300	—
Stick Hut	800	5 Wood
Stick Hut Upgrade	1200	5 Wood
Den	1000	—
Adobe	2000	10 Wood, 10 Ore
Adobe Upgrade	3000	5 Wood, 5 Ore
Bridge	4000	20 Ore
Bridge Upgrade	2000	10 Ore
Pyramid	6000	20 Ore, 20 Crystals

Barbarian's Bottom Line: 20,300 Gold, 25 Wood, 65 Ore, 20 Crystals

Table 3-3: Knight Dwelling Costs

Building Type	Gold Cost	Resource Cost
Thatched Hut	200	—
Archery Range	1000	—
Archery Range Upgrade	1500	5 Wood
Blacksmith	1000	5 Ore
Blacksmith Upgrade	1500	5 Ore
Armory	2000	10 Wood, 10 Ore
Armory Upgrade	2000	5 Wood, 5 Ore
Jousting Arena	3000	20 Wood
Jousting Arena Upgrade	3000	10 Wood
Cathedral	5000	20 Wood, 20 Crystals
Cathedral Upgrade	5000	10 Wood, 10 Crystals

Knight's Bottom Line: 25,200 Gold, 80 Wood, 25 Ore, 30 Crystals

Table 3-4: Necromancer Dwelling Costs

Building Type	Gold Cost	Resource Cost
Archaeological Dig	400	—
Graveyard	1000	—
Graveyard Upgrade	1000	—
Pyramid	1500	10 Ore
Pyramid Upgrade	1500	5 Ore
Mansion	3000	10 Wood
Mansion Upgrade	4000	5 Wood, 10 Gems, 10 Crystals
Mausoleum	4000	10 Ore, 10 Sulfur
Mausoleum Upgrade	3000	5 Ore, 5 Sulfur
Laboratory	10,000	10 Wood, 10 Ore, 5 Gems, 5 Crystals, 5 Mercury, 5 Sulfur

Necromancer's Bottom Line: 29,400 Gold, 25 Wood, 40 Ore, 15 Crystals, 15 Gems, 20 Sulfur, 5 Mercury

Table 3-5: Sorceress Dwelling Costs

Building Type	Gold Cost	Resource Cost
Treehouse	500	5 Wood
Cottage	1000	5 Wood
Cottage Upgrade	1500	5 Wood
Archery Range	1500	—
Archery Range Upgrade	1500	5 Wood
Stonehenge	2500	10 Ore
Stonehenge Upgrade	1500	5 Mercury
Fenced Meadow	3000	10 Wood, 10 Gems
Red Tower	10,000	30 Ore, 20 Mercury

Sorceress' Bottom Line: 23,000 Gold, 30 Wood, 40 Ore, 25 Mercury, 10 Gems

Table 3-6: Warlock Dwelling Costs

Building Type	Gold Cost	Resource Cost
Cave	500	—
Crypt	1000	10 ore
Nest	2000	—
Maze	3000	10 Gems
Maze Upgrade	2000	5 Gems
Swamp	4000	10 Sulfur
Black Tower	15000	30 Ore, 20 Sulfur
Black Tower Upgrade	5000	5 Ore, 10 Sulfur
Black Tower Upgrade 2	5000	5 Ore, 10 Sulfur

Warlock's Bottom Line: 37,500 Gold, 50 Ore, 15 Gems, 50 Sulfur

Table 3-7: Wizard Dwelling Costs

Building Type	Gold Cost	Resource Cost
Habitat	400	—
Boar Pen	800	—
Foundry	1500	5 Wood, 5 Ore
Foundry Upgrade	1500	5 Mercury
Cliff Nest	3000	5 Wood
Ivory Tower	3500	5 Wood, 5 Ore, 5 Crystals, 5 Gems, 5 Mercury, 5 Sulfur
Ivory Tower Upgrade	4000	5 Wood, 5 Ore
Cloud Castle	12,500	5 Wood, 5 Ore, 20 Gems
Cloud Castle Upgrade	12500	5 Wood, 5 Ore, 20 Gems

Wizard's Bottom Line: 39,700 Gold, 30 Wood, 25 Ore, 10 Mercury, 45 Gems, 5 Sulfur

FINAL COST EVALUATIONS

Tables 3-8 and 3-9 give you a final look at the relative costs of building creature dwellings. Table 3-8 compares the Bottom Line of each hero's creature dwelling costs, so you can tell easily which heroes have the cheapest dwelling costs, and which the most exorbitant construction fees. Table 3-9 focuses on resource costs instead of gold, and shows the total amount of resources building each castle requires, as well as the total amount of common resources, rare resources, and the number of **different** resources you need to build every dwelling in the castle (listed under "Diversity").

Every player has different theories about which hero class has the best castle. Instead of giving you our opinion on the matter, we'll just leave you with these tables, and let you decide for yourself.

Table 3-8. Comparison of Total Dwelling Costs

Hero Type	Gold	Wood	Ore	Crystals	Gems	Mercury	Sulfur
Barbarian	20,300	25	65	20	0	0	0
Knight	25,200	80	25	30	0	0	0
Necromancer	29,400	25	40	15	15	5	20
Sorceress	23,000	30	40	0	10	25	0
Warlock	37,500	0	50	0	15	0	50
Wizard	39,700	30	25	0	45	10	5

Table 3-9. Breakdown of Dwelling Resource Costs

Resource Costs	Common	Rare	Total	Diversity
Barbarian	90	20	110	3
Knight	105	30	135	3
Necromancer	65	55	120	6
Sorceress	70	35	105	4
Warlock	50	65	115	3
Wizard	55	60	115	5

ON TO CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4 is a detailed look at every creature in the game. The dwelling costs we covered in this chapter only tell half the story: Read the next chapter to find out what sort of creatures come out of those dwellings, and how they all stack up!



CHAPTER 4

Creature Comparison

At first glance, it may appear that some hero classes have access to a more diverse selection of creatures than others. However, when you strip away all the upgraded creatures (such as Minotaur Kings and Battle Dwarves), you'll find that each hero has only six basic creature types. This section compares each hero's creatures, giving you a clear idea of which class has the best monsters at each stage of the game.

We have assigned each creature a "level" corresponding to its cost and availability. For example, every hero starts the game with Level One creatures in his or her castle—Peasants, Sprites, and so forth. These are the game's weakest creatures. The next level includes slightly more powerful creatures—Orcs, Archers, Dwarves, and the like. By comparing creatures of similar cost and availability from each hero's menagerie, you can arrive at a better understanding of each creature type's true worth.

Of course, there isn't always a clear winner when you compare monsters of similar levels: Some are too similar, while others are too radically different in cost or abilities to judge them properly. However, investigating the differences between all the game's creatures will give you a good idea of which you'd like to use in your own armies.

Level One Creatures

Level One monsters are the so-called "swarm" creatures of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. They're effective only in huge swarms, and even then, you can't count on them for much. Each hero can construct a building that increases the weekly production of these "swarm" creatures, thus providing the vast numbers required to make them marginally effective.

This is not to say that Level One creatures are entirely useless, or that you should bypass them completely. Because enemy armies often ignore them, you can sometimes march Level One monsters up to your opponent for an unchallenged attack. Furthermore, there are times when a "cannon fodder" unit is extremely useful: Your Level One monsters can attack first and then absorb the enemy's retaliation attack, while your more important troops move in later for an unchallenged cheap shot.

Table 4-1. Level One Creatures

Monster	Owner	Hit Points	Speed	Flying?	Shots	Attack/Defense	Damage	Gold	Resources	Special
Goblin	B	3	4	No	0	3/1	1-2	40	None	None
Peasant	K	1	2	No	0	1/1	1-1	20	None	None
Skeleton	N	4	4	No	0	4/3	2-3	75	None	None
Sprite	S	2	4	Yes	0	4/2	1-2	50	None	Yes
Centaur	Wa	5	4	No	8	3/1	1-2	60	None	None
Halfling	Wi	3	3	No	12	2/1	1-3	50	None	None

Table 4-1 summarizes the game's Level One creatures. Note the singular uselessness of the Peasant. Other Level One creatures can occasionally damage an enemy unit, but Peasants are so feeble you need a vast number of them to make them into any sort of military threat. They typically are useful, therefore, only as cannon fodder—and their lack of speed makes them poor even in this capacity.

Next come Goblins. They're almost as useless as Peasants, but their superior speed, power, and damage abilities put them in a higher class.

Centaur, Halflings and Sprites are superior Level One monsters. Centaurs and Halflings are archers, and Sprites can fly, so they're all very likely to damage (or at least get close to) the enemy, thus fulfilling their "cannon fodder" role nicely, and sometimes even getting in a meaningful attack. Because Centaurs and Halflings are archers, enemy archers will target them automatically—and that's useful for taking the heat off your other troops. Furthermore, if the enemy does ignore them for some reason, their distance attack lets them inflict significant damage. Sprites can fly in for a quick attack with no fear of retaliation. Of course, when they are attacked, their low hit points guarantee they'll die in droves.

The best Level One creature undoubtedly is the Skeleton. Its speed, damage-dealing ability, and attack and defense ratings are at the very top of its

class, and its hit points are not far behind. Sure, Skeletons cost more than other Level One creatures, but who cares? Level One creatures are all so cheap it hardly matters. What matters is effectiveness, and Skeletons are effective, indeed.

In summary, the Warlock, Sorceress, Wizard, and especially the Necromancer benefit most from building "swarm" buildings in their castles. The Barbarian may benefit as well, but often to a lesser extent. The Knight, however, shouldn't even bother.

Level Two Creatures

Level Two monsters typically are affordable, but are not terribly effective. None of them are that expensive, however, and massing them into large armies under the guidance of a capable hero can make them a force to reckon with.

Table 4-2. Level Two Creatures

Creature	Owner	Hit Points	Speed	Flying?	Shots	Defense	Attack/ Damage	Gold	Resources	Special
Orc	B	10	2	No	8	3/4	2-3	140	None	None
Archer	K	10	2	No	12	5/3	2-3	150	None	None
Zombie	N	15	2	No	0	5/2	2-3	150	None	None
Dwarf	S	20	2	No	0	6/5	2-4	200	None	Magic Resistance (25% chance)
Gargoyle	Wa	15	6	Yes	0	4/7	2-3	200	None	None
Boar	Wi	15	6	No	0	5/4	2-3	150	None	None

Table 4-2 compares each hero's Level Two creatures. These creatures tend to be fragile and easily destroyed, but powerful enough to inflict good damage in return.

Orcs and Archers are the only ranged-attack units in this class, so it's hard to compare them to the other units. Long-distance attackers can be a great

asset in castle assault and defense, and against slow opponents, where their ability to strike from a distance often can be decisive. However, these units are something of a liability in most other situations: Enemy attackers always pick them apart first, and their damage-dealing ability decreases by half when an enemy unit is adjacent to them. Of these two creature types, Archers come out slightly ahead. Orcs are marginally tougher, but Archers deal more damage and can fire 12 times, although they rarely need their extra shots except in prolonged castle defense. The Orc Chieftain upgrades enjoy enhanced damage ability and hit points, but Rangers' two shots per attack renders them clearly superior.

Of the nonmissile troops, Zombies are the losers. If not for their enhanced hit points, they'd be no better than Skeletons! When upgraded to Mutant Zombies, they gain extra hit points and speed, but still are nothing more than durable Skeletons.

Next come Gargoyles and Boars. Both are quite fast and capable of dealing good damage. The Gargoyle has slightly less power, but substantially greater toughness, and can fly. It's the better creature of the two. Note that you can upgrade neither Boars nor Gargoyles.

Dwarves are arguably the best all-around troops in this class, although in some situations they take a back seat to the faster Gargoyles. They're slow, but they have the most hit points and greatest damage capability of any Level Two creature. Furthermore, upgrading them to Battle Dwarves doubles their speed and gains them a slight edge in toughness.

Level Three Creatures

Level three creatures are a fairly well-balanced group. Each creature has definite advantages and disadvantages, but no one creature is vastly superior to another. Table 4-3 rounds them up.

Table 4-3. Level Three Creatures

Creature	Owner	Hit Points	Speed	Flying!	Shots	Attack/Defense	Damage	Gold	Resources	Special
Wolf	B	20	6	No	0	6/2	3-5	200	None	2 Attacks
Pikeman	K	15	4	No	0	5/9	3-4	200	None	None
Mummy	N	25	4	No	0	6/6	3-4	250	None	Curse Enemy (20% chance)
Elf	S	15	4	No	24	4/3	2-3	250	None	2 Shots per Attack
Griffin	Wa	25	4	Yes	0	6/6	3-5	300	None	Unlimited Retaliation
Iron Golem	Wi	30	2	No	0	5/10	4-5	300	None	1/2 Damage from Elements

The Elf is the only ranged-attack unit in the lot. Elves' puny toughness and hit points make them extremely vulnerable on the battlefield. If you use Elves, always upgrade them to Grand Elves, thus taking advantage of the Grand Elves' superior speed and damage capabilities. However, even with this upgrade, Elves can be a liability unless you face slow opponents or are sieging or defending a castle. In those circumstances they can be excellent; Grand Elves are notoriously good castle defenders.

Pikemen and Wolves come next. In their basic state, Pikemen cost the same as Wolves, have slightly lower power, slightly lower damage capabilities, lower speed, and fewer hit points. However, they have an excellent defense value, which goes a long way toward keeping them alive. When you upgrade Pikemen to Veteran Pikemen, you get a more costly unit, but you also get five extra hit points and slightly better speed, resulting in a unit that's clearly superior to Wolves. Wolves, however are not far behind Pikemen in terms of abilities, and are more cost-effective. Their low defense isn't a problem if you group them into a huge pack and take advantage of their great speed, sending them in to shred weak enemy units who won't live long enough to counterattack.

Mummies and Griffins form the next tier of creatures. Both are very good: Mummies have good attack, defense, speed, and damage capabilities, plus a

nice special ability. They're also cheap. When upgraded to Royal Mummies, they're as expensive as Griffins, but are slightly faster and possess more hit points. Griffins have the advantage of flying, possess a more reliable special ability, and can do slightly more damage than either type of Mummy. Neither creature is demonstrably superior to the other.

Iron Golems are probably the most powerful creatures in this class, but they have the drawback of being very slow. Lack of speed is sometimes a nonfactor, but can be a real killer when you face an army full of long-range attackers. With this weakness in mind, we must admit that Iron Golems are real bruisers: They're quite powerful and fantastically tough. They deal the most damage of any creature in this class, and have great hit points. When upgraded to Steel Golems, they're marginally faster, and possess the best power and hit points of any Level Three monster, in addition to their already remarkable defense. An army of Golems is an army to reckon with. Add them to a hero with great Defense, and you've got a unit that's extremely hard to kill.

Level Four Creatures

It's hard to declare a clear winner among Level Four creatures. The weaker monsters tend to be good "value" monsters, while the more expensive units tend to be worth the extra gold. Table 4-4 compares these midlevel troops.

Table 4-4. Level Four Creatures

Creature	Owner	Hit Points	Speed	Flying?	Shots	Attack/Defense	Damage	Gold	Resources	Special
Ogre	B	40	2	No	0	9/5	4-6	300	None	None
Swordsman	K	25	4	No	0	7/9	4-6	250	None	None
Vampire	N	30	4	Yes	0	8/6	5-7	500	None	No Retaliation
Druid	S	25	5	No	8	7/5	5-8	350	None	None
Minotaur	Wa	35	4	No	0	9/8	5-10	400	None	None
Roc	Wi	40	4	Yes	0	7/7	4-8	400	None	None

The only missile-firing unit in this category is the Druid. Druids share the same weaknesses as other ranged attackers—few hit points (the lowest in Level Four), attack and defense ratings that are lower than the norm, and weakened close-range attacks. However, Druids have sufficient attack and damage ratings to inflict significant damage, and they're mobile enough to evade slow enemies. As Greater Druids they gain a bit of defense and speed.

Of the close-combat troops in this category, Swordsmen initially appear to be the weakest. As Master Swordsmen their hit points climb to 30, and they gain a point of speed, but their cost also grows to match that of a basic Ogre, and a Master Swordsman is not always a match for a bloodthirsty Ogre, not to mention a bloodthirsty Ogre Lord. Speaking of Ogres, they lack Swordsmen's high defense rating and speed, but their excellent hit points and attack rating make them a surefire favorite if you use 'em properly (that is, **strike first**). As Ogre Lords their hit points become truly excellent, and they gain both speed and damage ability. However, they're also more expensive than Master Swordsmen. From an economic standpoint, therefore, you can consider Swordsmen a bargain.

The Roc is also something of a bargain. For 400 Gold you get a flying creature with good speed, attack and defense, damage, and hit points. It isn't upgradable, but it's a solid creature, and arguably better than the more expensive Ogre Lord.

At the high end of the scale are the Vampire and Minotaur. In terms of sheer power, they're more than a match for a Roc, even in their basic forms. In their upgraded forms, they're expensive but arguably the most powerful creatures of the lot. The Vampire Lord's power comes from high statistics (great hit points and attack, good damage and speed) and great special abilities (it flies, does not permit retaliation, and drains life from its opponents to cure itself). The Minotaur King, by contrast, has no special abilities and doesn't even fly, but its raw statistics are remarkable. Excellent attack and defense ratings, the best damage rating in this class, very good hit points and excellent speed make the Minotaur King a formidable foe, even for a Vampire Lord—especially if it uses its speed to best advantage and attacks first.

Level Five Creatures

Level Five creatures are truly a mixed bag, in terms of both cost and abilities. Perhaps the biggest winner is the Knight, whose Cavalry units are relatively weak, but extremely cheap (see Table 4-5).

Table 4-5. Level Five Creatures

Creature	Owner	Hit Points	Speed	Flying!	Shots	Attack/Defense	Damage	Gold	Resources	Special
Troll	B	40	4	No	8	10/5	5–7	600	None	Regenerates
Cavalry	K	30	6	No	0	10/9	5–10	300	None	None
Lich	N	25	5	No	12	7/12	8–10	750	None	Fireball (area effect)
Unicorn	S	40	5	No	0	10/9	7–14	500	None	Blinds (20% chance)
Hydra	Wa	75	2	No	0	8/9	6–12	800	None	No Retaliation, Attacks All Adjacent Hexes
Mage	Wi	30	5	No	12	11/7	7–9	600	None	No Adjacent Penalty

There are three ranged units in this category—Mage, Lich, and Troll. The basic Mage and Troll cost the same, as do their upgrades. Trolls have slightly better hit points and can regenerate, but Mages have higher defense ratings. Mages are faster, have higher attack and defense, and do more damage per attack. Furthermore, they suffer no damage penalty in close combat. In their upgraded forms, War Trolls get a bit of extra speed and damage ability, while Archmages gain speed, attack, and defense. Overall, Archmages and Lichs tend to be the superior units, though one could make a case for each creature type.

Lichs cost more than the other missile units. They also have lower hit points and attack power than the others, but deal better damage and have higher defense. As upgraded Power Lichs, they gain a significant number of hit points, a bit of speed, and yet more defense. This makes them somewhat harder to kill. It's the Lich's remarkable fireball attack, however, that really puts it over the top in terms of power. The Lich's ranged attack damages creatures in several hexes, instead of just damaging a single target. This makes Lichs the artillery units of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**, and a real force to reckon with.

Of the remaining units, Cavalry, and their upgraded brethren, Champions, would seem to be the worst. However, their extremely low cost enables Knights to stock their armies with many of these creatures, making them extremely effective. Unicorns are slower than Champions, but deal more damage and have the special ability of temporarily blinding their opponents. However, Unicorns' higher cost makes Champions look cheap by comparison.

Hydras form this category's final unit, and they're very tough, indeed. They damage creatures in all adjacent hexes, so they can be great for clearing out big clumps of enemy troops. Furthermore, they have huge hit-point totals. Using Hydras effectively can be tricky: They're extremely slow, and it's difficult to position them where their special ability is useful. Despite this, Hydras are perhaps the toughest of all Level Five units.

Level Six Creatures

Level Six creatures have several distinct power levels. However, even though some creatures are more powerful than others, all are very potent, and the very best creatures have significant costs. See Table 4-6 for details.

Table 4-6. Level Six Creatures

Creature	Owner	Hit Points	Speed	Flying?	Shots	Attack/Defense	Damage	Gold	Resources	Special
Cyclops	B	80	5	No	0	12/9	12-24	750	Crys	20% Chance to Paralyze, 2-Space Area Attack
Paladin	K	50	5	No	0	11/12	10-20	600	None	2 Attacks
Bone Dragon	N	150	4	Yes	0	11/9	25-45	1500	None	Mass Fear (Reduces Morale)
Phoenix	S	100	7	Yes	0	12/10	20-40	1500	Merc	Area Effect Attack
Green Dragon	Wa	200	4	Yes	0	12/12	25-50	3000	Sulf	Magic Immunity, Area Attack
Giant	Wi	150	4	No	0	13/10	20-30	2000	Gems	Immune to Mind Spells

Cyclopes and Paladins represent the bottom tier of Level Six creatures, in terms of both power and cost. Cyclopes enjoy the edge in power, damage, and hit points. However, Paladins have significantly better defense and are cheaper. Paladins can be upgraded, while Cyclopes can't.

Upgraded Paladins are called Crusaders. A Crusader costs more in gold than a Cyclops, but his ability to strike twice each round makes him much more useful than a Cyclops, whose two-space attack is worthless unless enemy units line up conveniently. Furthermore, Cyclopes require crystals, whereas Knights are one of only two Level Six creatures requiring no resources other than gold to produce. That may not seem significant, but believe us, it is.

Next come Phoenixes and Bone Dragons. Phoenixes have fewer hit points and inflict less damage than Bone Dragons, but have superior attack and defense ratings, and are much faster. The Phoenix's area attack is fairly useful, as is the Bone Dragon's aura of fear. Both units cost the same amount of gold, but the Bone Dragon requires no resources, making it a significantly better unit in the eyes of some generals.

At the top of the heap are Dragons and Giants. Both have upgrades—you can actually upgrade the Dragon twice! Both require insane amounts of gold, and both require special resources. There's really no comparison between these units and the other Level Six units; these two are far more powerful. Between fully upgraded Giants (Titans) and fully upgraded Dragons (Black Dragons), it's hard to decide which is better. Dragons attack multiple spaces and resist magic, but Titans have a crushing long-range attack, and no penalty for short-range combat. Both units have their followings.

AND THE WINNER IS...

In many cases you'll want as many troops as you can get your hands on, regardless of how good or bad they are. Furthermore, no unit (except perhaps the Peasant) is so inferior that it's completely worthless. However, on some occasions you must pick and choose, and hopefully this section has

given you a good idea of which units are most worthwhile out of each class, and therefore which units to spend your gold on first. Also, this comparison should give you a good idea of where each hero's strength lies. Knights have cheap and effective "swarm" attackers at all levels except the lowest. Barbarian units are even cheaper, with Ogres standing out for efficiency and durability—but no Barbarian units are truly superior. Dwarves and Unicorns are a particular strength of the Sorceress. Gargoyles, Hydra, and Minotaurs are a great investment for the Warlock, as are the all-powerful Dragons. Golems and Titans are excellent Wizard units, while Skeletons and Bone Dragons make the Necromancer's job easier in the early and late phases of the game, respectively.

Ultimately, **you** must decide which units you think are best. Such judgments will come naturally as you play the game again and again. Who knows? Perhaps you'll prove these creature evaluations completely wrong and conquer the world with an army of Peasants! Until then, however, consider this chapter your definitive guide to the creatures of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**.



CHAPTER 5

The Treasury

The lands of Might and Magic contain dozens of unique artifacts and locales. This chapter documents every item and interactive site your heroes might encounter. The following easy-to-read charts will help you gauge the worth of each artifact and location. Refer to this chapter to decide beforehand whether a given location is worth visiting or a given artifact worth possessing. This is the same knowledge your computer opponents already possess, so read carefully!

ARTIFACTS

We've sorted the following artifacts into function-based categories. This breakdown allows you to compare artifacts with similar abilities and gain a better sense of each item's relative power.

A table of artifacts follows the general introduction to each category (for example, "Attack Skill Artifacts," "Gold Producers").

A Note Concerning Artifact Class

There are four classes of artifact—Treasure, Minor, Major, and Ultimate. These categories have no impact on how the artifact works. Rather, they're abstract categories that affect where your heroes will find that particular artifact. For example, one Adventure screen location might possess a random Treasure artifact, while another might hold a random Major artifact. In essence, then, each artifact's category defines where and under what circumstances your hero will find it. The list of Adventure screen locations later in this chapter reveals which artifact categories are associated with which sites.

Attack Skill Artifacts

These artifacts enhance your hero's Attack skill. Some artifacts, like the Spiked Shield and Spiked Helm, enhance both Attack and Defense.

The Dragon Sword of Dominion and the Spiked Shield are undoubtedly the best artifacts in this category.

Table 5-1. Attack Skill Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Dragon Sword of Dominion	Major	+3 Attack
Spiked Shield	Major	+2 Attack, +2 Defense
Power Axe of Dominion	Minor	+2 Attack
Spiked Helm	Minor	+1 Attack, +1 Defense
Giant Flail of Dominion	Treasure	+1 Attack
Thunder Mace of Dominion	Minor	+1 Attack

Defense Skill Artifacts

These artifacts augment a hero's Defense skill. Defense makes Knights and Barbarians even tougher, and adds a much-needed boost to the toughness of spellcasters' armies.

Table 5-2. Defense Skill Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Divine Breastplate of Protection	Major	+3 Defense
Spiked Shield	Major	+2 Defense, +2 Attack
Stealth Shield of Protection	Minor	+2 Defense
Spiked Helm	Minor	+1 Defense, +1 Attack
Defender's Helm of Protection	Treasure	+1 Defense
Armored Gauntlets of Protection	Treasure	+1 Defense

Spell Power Artifacts

Want a quick boost for your Spell Power? These artifacts are just the ticket.

Table 5-3. Spell Power Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Arcane Necklace of Magic	Major	+4 Spell Power
Witch's Broach of Magic	Major	+3 Spell Power
Castor's Bracelet of Magic	Minor	+2 Spell Power
Mage's Ring of Power	Minor	+2 Spell Power
Black Pearl	Major	+2 Spell Power, +2 Knowledge
White Pearl	Minor	+1 Spell Power, +1 Knowledge

Knowledge Artifacts

Your hero's Knowledge rating will get a huge boost from the Foremost Scroll or Superior Scroll. Learn to recognize them.

Table 5-4. Knowledge Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Foremost Scroll	Major	+5 Knowledge
Superior Scroll	Major	+4 Knowledge
Major Scroll	Minor	+3 Knowledge
Minor Scroll	Minor	+2 Knowledge
Black Pearl	Major	+2 Knowledge, +2 Spell Power
White Pearl	Minor	+1 Knowledge, +1 Spell Power

Gold Producing Artifacts

The quest for gold is eternal, and these artifacts make that quest a little bit easier. Still, don't overrate them. Castles are still your best sources for a steady and reliable gold supply.

Table 5-5. Gold Producing Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Endless Sack of Gold	Major	1000 Gold/day
Endless Bag of Gold	Major	750 Gold/day
Endless Purse of Gold	Minor	500 Gold/day

Spell Enhancement Artifacts

These seemingly innocent artifacts can turn a typical spell into a real winner. Grab an Evercold Icicle and you'll bowl over enemies with your Cold Ray and Cold Ring; discover an Ankh, and your potent resurrect spells will allow your army to fight indefinitely.

Table 5-6. Spell Enhancement Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Wizard's Hat	Major	Spell Duration +10
Ankh	Minor	Double effect for resurrect and animate spells
Book of Elements	Minor	Double effect for summoning spells
Gold Watch	Minor	Double effect for hypnotize
Evercold Icicle	Minor	Cold spells deal 150 percent damage
Everhot Lava Rock	Minor	Heat spells deal 150 percent damage
Lightning Rod	Minor	Lightning spells deal 150 percent damage
Enchanted Hourglass	Treasure	Spell Duration +2

Spell Cost Reduction Artifacts

These artifacts are nice, but definitely fall into the “handy-but-not-essential” category. Grab them if they’re available, but don’t expect miracles.

Table 5-7. Spell Cost Reduction Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Elemental Ring	Minor	Halves cost of summoning spells
Evil Eye	Minor	Halves cost of curse spells
Skullcap	Minor	Halves cost of mind-affecting spells
Snake Ring	Treasure	Halves cost of bless spells

Spell Protection Artifacts

These artifacts are nice to have, though the chances of their actually being useful are slim. After all, it doesn’t matter how many Pendants of Life you’ve got if your enemies aren’t using death magic.

The exception to this rule is the handy Wand of Negation, which allows you to cast any spells you’d like on your own creatures, and rest secure no one will dispel them.

Table 5-8. Spell Protection Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Holy Pendant	Treasure	Immune to curse
Kinetic Pendant	Treasure	Immune to paralyze
Pendant of Death	Treasure	Immune to holy word/shout
Pendant of Free Will	Treasure	Immune to hypnotize
Pendant of Life	Treasure	Immune to death wave and ripple
Seeing-eye Pendant	Treasure	Immune to blind
Serenity Pendant	Treasure	Immune to berserk
Wand of Negation	Major	No dispel on your creatures
Fire Cloak	Treasure	Half damage versus heat
Ice Cloak	Treasure	Half damage versus cold
Lightning Helm	Treasure	Half damage versus lightning

Mobility Artifacts

We cackle with glee whenever we get our hands on these artifacts. Your superhero must be very mobile if you're to succeed in **Heroes of Might and Magic II**, and these artifacts are just the way to provide that attribute.

Table 5-9. Mobility Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
True Compass of Mobility	Major	Extra Land and Sea Move
Nomad Boots of Mobility	Major	Extra Land Move
Traveler's Boots of Mobility	Major	Extra Land Move
Sailor's Astrolabe of Mobility	Minor	Extra Sea Move

Luck Artifacts

These artifacts all add 1 to your hero's Luck rating, permanently. They can be extremely valuable in combat.

Table 5-10. Luck Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Gambler's Lucky Coin	Treasure	+1 Luck
Golden Horseshoe	Treasure	+1 Luck
Four Leaf Clover	Treasure	+1 Luck
Lucky Rabbit's Foot	Treasure	+1 Luck

Morale Artifacts

Extra morale can be a lifesaver in close battles. These artifacts all bestow a permanent +1 Morale to the hero bearing them.

Table 5-11. Morale Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Medal of Courage	Treasure	+1 Morale
Medal of Distinction	Treasure	+1 Morale
Medal of Honor	Treasure	+1 Morale
Medal of Valor	Treasure	+1 Morale

Cursed Artifacts

Steer clear of cursed artifacts whenever possible! Unfortunately, these artifacts tend to pop up in treasure chests, where it's impossible to predict whether you'll find them.

Table 5-12. Cursed Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Fizbin of Misfortune	Treasure	-2 Morale, Cursed
Hideous Mask	Treasure	Prevents monsters from joining hero
Tax Lien	Treasure	-250 Gold/turn

Miscellaneous Artifacts

These artifacts don't fit into any of the foregoing categories. None is vital for success, but all can prove handy at one time or another.

Table 5-13. Miscellaneous Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Ammo Cart	Minor	Endless ammo
Ballista of Quickness	Major	Extra catapult shot per turn
Endless Cart of Ore	Minor	+1 Ore/turn
Endless Cord of Wood	Minor	+1 Wood/turn
Endless Pouch of Crystal	Major	+1 Crystal/turn
Endless Pouch of Gems	Major	+1 Gems/turn
Endless Pouch of Sulfur	Major	+1 Sulfur/turn
Endless Vial of Mercury	Major	+1 Mercury/turn
Golden Bow	Treasure	No archery penalty for obstacles
Power Ring	Minor	+2 Spell Points/turn
Statesman's Quill	Treasure	Surrendering costs 10% of normal cost
Telescope	Treasure	+1 Scouting

Ultimate Artifacts

Ultimate Artifacts don't just show up on the ground. You'll only find them by visiting enough Obelisks to learn their locations, then digging them up. That's why we didn't bother showing them all: You'll have to find them on your own!

Sometimes the whole point of a scenario is to find an Ultimate Artifact. Even if that isn't the point, these artifacts improve your hero's power so much that winning the game becomes much easier.

Table 5-14. Ultimate Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Ultimate Book of Knowledge	Ultimate	+12 Knowledge
Ultimate Cloak of Protection	Ultimate	+12 Defense
Ultimate Sword of Dominion	Ultimate	+12 Attack
Ultimate Wand of Magic	Ultimate	+12 Spell Power
Ultimate Shield	Ultimate	+6 Attack and Defense
Ultimate Staff	Ultimate	+6 Power and Knowledge
Ultimate Crown	Ultimate	+4 all stats
Golden Goose	Ultimate	+10,000 Gold/turn

ADVENTURE SCREEN LOCATIONS

Now let's look at the Adventure Screen locations for **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. The value of these places ranges from vital to useless, and you'll spend much less time scurrying around the map if you know beforehand which is which.

Luck- and Morale-Enhancing Locations

Though hardly vital, most good adventurers try to visit these locations whenever it's convenient. Visit enough of them, and you'll find that the extra luck and morale really add up.

Table 5-15. Luck- and Morale-Enhancing Locations

Location	Effect
Buoy	+1 Morale
Faerie Mound	+1 Luck
Faerie Ring	+1 Luck
Fountain	+1 Luck
Idol	+1 Luck
Oasis	+1 Morale and +2× movement, temporarily
Temple	+1 Morale
Watering Hole	+1 Morale and temporary movement bonus

Creature-Generating Locations

These locations let your hero collect extra creatures for his army. Some locations offer free creatures, while others require you to pay a fee. Furthermore, tough monsters guard some locations, and you must defeat them before you may purchase creatures.

In general, any location with "generator" in the Effect column is a place where you must purchase creatures. Sites offering free creatures are so noted.

Table 5-16. Creature-Generating Locations

Location	Effect
Brick House	Archer generator
Cave	Free Centaurs
City of the Dead	Power Lich generator, after hero defeats 5 Vampire Lords, 20 Zombies, 5 Power Liches, 20 Zombies
Cottage	Dwarf generator
Dragon City	Dragon generator, after hero defeats 3 Greens, 1 Red and 1 Black Dragon
Excavation	Free Skeletons
Genie Lamp	Genie generator (2–4 Genies, once only)
Halfling Hole	Free Halflings
Rogue Wagon	Rogue generator
Ruins	Medusa generator
Straw House	Goblin generator
Tent	Nomad generator
Thatched House	Peasant generator
Tree City	Sprites generator
Tree House	Free Sprites
Troll Bridge	Troll Generator, after hero defeats random number of Trolls
Watch Tower	Free Orcs

Skill-Enhancing Locations

These sites allow your heroes to augment their primary or secondary skills. Visit them whenever possible, because gaining these permanent bonuses is almost as good as gaining a free level!

Table 5-17. Skill-Enhancing Locations

Location	Effect
Fort	+1 Defense skill, once
Mercenary Camp	+1 Attack, once
Standing Stones	+1 Power, once
Witch Doctor's Hut	+1 Knowledge, once
Witch's Hut	Random secondary skill
Xanadu	+1 to all four primary skills if hero's level + (Diplomacy skill \times 2) is greater than 9

Treasure Locations

These locations give your heroes a chance to collect gold or resources. Some locations require your heroes to fight for the treasure; others don't. Unless we've noted otherwise, these locations provide one-time bonuses.

Table 5-18. Treasure Locations

Location	Effect
Abandoned Gold Mine	Fight Ghosts for gold
Camp Fire	Find gold and a random resource
Chest	Find 1000 Gold, 1500 Gold, 2000 Gold or a Treasure artifact
Flotsam	Find 5 Wood (25%), 5 Wood & 200 Gold (25%), 10 Wood & 500 Gold (25%), or Nothing (25%)
Graveyard	Fight Mutant Zombies for gold or an artifact
Lean-to	Find 1–4 units of any resource (60%), or nothing (40%)
Magic Garden	Receive 500 Gold or 5 gems
Mill	Find 2 units of a random resource, weekly
Shipwreck Survivor	Receive a Treasure Artifact (60%), Minor Artifact (20%), or Major Artifact (20%)
Trading Post	Exchange resources at a low ratio, once per week
Wagon	Discover 2–5 units of any resource (50%), a Treasure or Minor artifact (10%), or nothing 40%
Water Wheel	Collect 500 or 1000 Gold once per week

Spell Locations

These locales benefit spellcasting heroes. Some bestow spells, while others restore a hero's magic points. Most of these sites are permanent, though some of them (such as the Shrines) offer no extra benefits for heroes who try to visit more than once.

Table 5-19. Spell Locations

Location	Effect
Artesian Spring	Temporarily doubles spell points, re-usable
Magic Well	Restores spell points to maximum, re-usable
Pyramid	Bestows Level 5 spell after hero defeats 3×10 Royal Mummies and 2×15 Vampire Lords, and receives a temporary -2 Luck
Shrine of the First Circle	Get level 1 spell
Shrine of the Second Circle	Gives level 2 spell
Shrine of the Third Circle	Gives level 3 spell

Miscellaneous Locations

This category is a catch-all for unique and atypical locales. Some, such as Obelisks and Travel Gates, are common and necessary elements of the game. Others, such as the Lighthouse, are much more specialized.

Table 5-20. Miscellaneous Location

Location	Effect
Bottle	Functions as a sign post
Demon Cave	Fight demon for Experience, Gold or Death, or fight the demon's Elemental minions
Derelict Ship	Fight with Skeletons
Freeman's Foundry	Upgrades Pikemen, Swordsmen, Golems
Gazebo	1000 Experience Points, but just once per hero
Hill Fort	Upgrades Orcs, Ogres, and Dwarves
Lighthouse	All your ships move farther each turn while you own the Lighthouse
Magellan's Maps	Buy sea map for 1000 gold
Obelisk	Grants a puzzle piece
Observatory	20 squares light up
Skeleton	Find Skeletons or find an artifact
Shipwreck	Fight Ghosts for a chance of finding something worthwhile
Shrine	Gives information, much like a Thieves' Guild
Sphinx	Answer Riddle for Treasure
Travel Gate	Teleports you to another Travel Gate of the same type
Tree of Knowledge	Once per hero: +1 level free (50%), +1 level for 2000 gold (25%), or +1 level for 10 gems (25%)
Whirlpool	Teleports you to another Whirlpool



CHAPTER 6

Grand Strategy

Warfare has two distinct levels—strategic and tactical. Novices often can't distinguish between the two. What's the difference? In simple terms, strategy is the "big picture" and tactics the "little picture." Imagine a medieval general sitting in his war room, the map of a vast battlefield spread on a table before him. Small figures on this map represent armies of pikemen and archers. With this map as a reference, the general decides, in broad terms, what each army should do. The details of individual battles and actions are not decided here; rather, the general prepares a general "game plan" for his conquests. From the map's lofty perspective, he orchestrates the movement of entire armies, bending them to his plan. This is grand strategy at its finest.

Tactics, however, take place on a smaller scale. Instead of the general and his war map, consider a knight and his troop of swordsmen trudging through a forest. Suddenly a band of archers opens fire, hailing arrows down upon the men. At this point, decisions must be made. Will the knight order some of his men to charge the archers, hoping they can reach the enemy before arrows cut them down? Perhaps he will order some of his men to take up a defensive position while others sneak through the underbrush to catch the archers by surprise. These small-scale decisions fall into the category of tactics.

Chapter 7 is devoted to the subject of battle tactics, while this chapter covers the strategic level of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. Of course, each battlefield is different. We'll explore these in detail in chapters 9 and 10. However, every scenario requires you to make a number of grand-scale strategic decisions, regardless of the terrain and your opposition. This chapter outlines a general game plan that will work to a greater or lesser extent in all your battles.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ENEMY

Most of the time when you play **Heroes of Might and Magic II**, you'll play against one or more computerized opponents. These computerized foes differ considerably from any human opponent. This section takes a hard look at your digital opponents, and notes the unique challenges they present to a human player. By understanding your enemy, you'll gain insight on which grand-level strategies are most effective, and what makes them work so well.

Computer's Starting Values

If you've ever wondered what the difference was between Easy, Normal, Hard, Expert, and Impossible difficulty levels, this section will shed some light on the matter.

The Easy Level

The Easy level severely limits computer AI (artificial intelligence); occasionally it will make very bad decisions, such as attacking when it has no chance of winning, or ignoring valuable resources. While the human player starts an Easy game with 10,000 Gold, 30 Wood and Ore, and 10 of each rare resource (like sulfur and gems), the computer starts with only 7,500 Gold, 20 Wood and Ore, and 5 of each rare resource. Crippling the AI and limiting its resources makes for a feeble opponent.

Summary:

A flat-out confused AI with a resource disadvantage makes the Easy level easy indeed.

The Normal Level

At the Normal level, the computer's AI is intact. It's more or less the same AI you'll find at harder levels of difficulty, just not **quite** as sharp. The main flaw in the computer's thinking at this level is its tendency to start fights it can't necessarily win, though it usually comes close.

The human player receives 7,500 Gold, 20 of each common resource (wood and ore) and 5 of each rare resource at this level. Meanwhile the computer starts with 10,000 Gold, 30 Wood and Ore, and 10 of each rare resource.

Summary:

Competent computer AI plus a substantial resource advantage means human players must hustle to catch up in the early stages of the game. Once they've caught up, though, human players often can breathe easily.

The Hard Level

The Hard difficulty level features an AI similar to the Normal level. The main difference is that at the Hard level, the computer only likes to attack you when it feels it has a 60–40 hit point advantage over your troops. It considers other

factors, such as hero level and artifacts, but the main influence is hit points: If the computer has more than you, it usually will attack. There's still room for miscalculation, so you have a chance of winning when the computer attacks you—especially if you've got potent spells or a well-defended castle.

At this level the human player gets only 5,000 Gold, 10 Ore and Wood, and two of each rare resource to start with. On the other hand, computer foes start with 10,000 Gold, 30 Wood and Ore, and 10 of each rare resource—a significant advantage.

Furthermore, at the Hard level the computer really starts to "cheat." It gains 10 percent more gold per turn, every turn, than you would if you controlled the same resources (castles, towns, gold mines, and gold-producing artifacts) it does. Worse, computer opponents automatically get 1 free Wood and Ore per turn, even if they don't control any lumber mills or mines!

Summary:

The human player must quickly overcome a heavy early resource disadvantage. However, even after the game reaches a state of relative equilibrium in terms of castles and heroes, the computer players will rake in more gold and resources than the human. This means human players must be pretty sharp to win. It's best to use the Hard difficulty level on easy maps, or when the opposition you face at the Normal level finally bores you.

The Expert Level

The Expert level takes the Hard level one step further. Computer heroes tend only to attack when they think they have a 75–25 advantage, so you'll almost always lose when the computer heroes initiate combat. Of course, that also means you can avoid combat by keeping a reasonably strong garrison at your castles, because the computer won't bother with you unless it's pretty sure it can win.

Human players start with next to nothing at the Expert level—2500 Gold, 5 Wood and 5 Ore. Meanwhile, the computer starts with 10,000

Gold, 30 Wood and Ore, and 10 of each rare resource. Furthermore, the computer gains 25 percent more gold per turn than a human player with comparable resources, and gets one of **each resource** every turn, absolutely free.

Summary:

Unless you're a real master, you'll find only frustration at this level. Your starting resource disadvantage is tremendous, and makes it almost impossible for any hero type—especially spellcasters—to get a foothold. Spellcasters need lots of rare resources for their high-level buildings, and often need rare resources to purchase their top-level creatures. When you start the game with no gold and no resources, it's tough enough just getting gold, wood and ore, much less rare resources such as sulfur and mercury.

The Impossible Level

At the Impossible level of difficulty, the computer usually attacks only when it has an overwhelming 90–10 advantage. Therefore, if and when computer heroes initiate combat, you have little or no hope of winning.

You might actually use this conservative approach to battle in your favor: You'd think all you must do is keep your army **somewhere close** to the stature of enemy armies to keep them safe from attack. However, computer players all start with 10,000 Gold, 30 Wood and Ore, and 10 of each rare resource, to the human player's **nothing**. More importantly, however, the computer gains **twice** as much gold as a human player per turn, and gets two of every resource every turn, free of charge. This means a computer player with as many towns and castles as you have will generate fully twice as much income, and needn't worry about securing valuable resources such as mines and lumber mills.

Summary:

The Impossible level exists for the sake of die-hard strategy gamers who can never get enough challenge. Even top-level players can't win consistently at this level. To win at the Impossible level, you must spend hundreds of hours playing the game and thinking about your strategy, much as the playtesters at New World Computing do. You'll also need a lot of luck.

Computer Advantages

Aside from the advantages they may receive due to the difficulty level, your computerized foes enjoy several extra benefits that become more and more pronounced as the level of difficulty increases. Here's a look at those perquisites.

Extra Knowledge

The first benefit your digital foes enjoy is superior battlefield intelligence. At the higher levels of difficulty, the computer always knows exactly how strong each of your heroes, towns, and castles is. This is a tremendous advantage, because unlike a human opponent, who often will overlook your weak spots, the computer tends to make a beeline for any poorly defended hero or castle. Good human players keep a close eye on their digital foes' actions, and pay attention when those foes make a straight line for any one of their heroes or castles. Watching computer opponents is a foolproof way to learn when your heroes or castles are poorly defended.

The computer's extra knowledge is also an advantage when it comes to scouting. The computer always knows where your units are, and how strong they are, so it knows when to send weak units out to collect goodies (treasure piles and mines). You, on the other hand, probably will lose a few heroes as they try to collect valuable items.

This brings us to the computer's final area of superior knowledge: At higher difficulty levels, it knows the map better than you do. While you muddle around in total darkness, the computer knows the location of every town and resource, just as if it were looking at a clear, uninterrupted view of the Scenario Editor (see Figure 6-1). That's a big advantage.



Figure 6-1. The Scenario Editor allows you to see a battlefield with perfect clarity.

Playing Spoiler

Despite the fact that every hero in **Heroes of Might and Magic II** supposedly tries to win the game, you'll find that some computer opponents seem to want to ruin your day more than to win. Sure, your computer foes often fight amongst themselves. But have you noticed how they never hold back when they fight against you? They lob spells and burn through creatures like there's no tomorrow, while you might be tempted to hold something back for later combats, just in case you can't get back to a castle or Mages' Guild quickly. This all-or-nothing mentality makes computer opponents a real pain.

Computer Weaknesses

Well, now. Your computerized foes usually start with more resources than you, know where everything is, and only attack when they've got a great shot at winning. Furthermore, they tend to defend their castles well and stock their heroes with strong armies at higher difficulty levels. Where's the weakness?

Technically speaking, the computer has no true weaknesses, at least at the higher difficulty settings. You can never hope to possess the knowledge your computer foes enjoy, even if you build a hundred Thieves' Guilds. While those Guilds do sometimes help, they provide less aid than the detailed information available to a computerized opponent, and your computer foes don't have to waste time or money building the Guild! Furthermore, they have complete understanding of the game situation at all times, while you must physically keep checking in with the Guild for new information—and you could easily miss something.

Yet, your computer foes do indeed have a weakness, though a fairly subtle one. These digital opponents are thoroughly competent on all fronts, and seldom make mistakes, if ever. This very competency and consistency comprises the computer's greatest weakness: Because it always does the more-or-less right thing, and because it makes a point of adequately protecting all its cities and units, you often can count on that very consistency to defeat the computer. The next section explains.

EXPLOITING COMPUTER WEAKNESSES

Eager to start beating on those computer opponents? The following sections show you how to exploit their only real weaknesses—the uniformity of their armies and the predictability of their actions.

Reading the Computer's Thoughts

The computer isn't subtle, and it doesn't bluff. If it sees that you've got an unprotected castle, it will send its nearest hero to take that castle. If it sees that its powerful hero is near one of your weaker heroes, it usually attacks your weak hero. A good player notes the computer's posture, and learns from it.

Never disable the game option that shows you each enemy hero's movements. It's important to keep track of those heroes, because you can learn a lot by watching them move around. If they see a weak spot, they'll head straight for it. Therefore, if you want to know whether your castle is strong enough to stand on its own (without the aid of a hero), you can move the hero away from the castle and watch nearby enemy heroes. If they immediately head for the castle, then you should think about bolstering the castle's defenses. If the enemy heroes don't rush in, however, the castle probably will be safe. Note that you should never try this tactic if there are enemy heroes within one turn's march of your castle: The enemy hero will march right in and take over, and you'll have learned your lesson the hard way.

If enemy heroes swarm around your castle, taking this mine or that resource but never attacking, you can reasonably assume their armies aren't that tough. Of course, at the highest levels of difficulty this is a less effective measure of enemy troop strength, as the enemy heroes' army must be **significantly** better than your castle's garrison before it will try to attack.

Building a Superhero

The computer is highly conscious of the power of each of its heroes and castles, and doesn't like anything to be vulnerable. Therefore, it never leaves any

hero or castle completely unprotected. At the higher levels of difficulty, the computer also tends to avoid attacking your castles and heroes unless it's quite sure it can win.

Combine these two tendencies, and you'll reach an interesting conclusion: You can skimp a little on the number of troops you post at each castle, because your opponents won't attack until they've got a really significant advantage. Take those excess troops and give them to a single hero. That hero will become your "superhero."

The concept of the superhero is based on an old piece of advice espoused by Sun Tzu, which translates roughly like this: "Match your strength to the enemy's weakness." The computer's heroes and castles are all adequately strong, but if you manage to take one single hero and make an absolute wrecking machine of him or her, that hero's army can defeat just about any other hero or storm any castle in the land. When you've reached that point, you can win by matching your strength (the superhero) against the computer's weakest castles.

When building a superhero, the key is to strike a fine balance. You must leave enough troops in your castles to adequately protect them, and it's important that your "non-superheroes" are at least adequate; pushover heroes are next to useless. But it's also important that your superhero be very powerful. It

takes a lot of time and experience to learn just how many troops to give your superhero, and just how much experience and treasure to let him or her accumulate. Figure 6-2 shows a typically powerful superhero.

Allow superheroes to fight most of your battles, carry most of your artifacts, and visit most of the experience-giving locations on the map. After assembling enough experience, troops, and artifacts, the hero becomes almost unbeatable, which is precisely the point.



Figure 6-2. This superhero is much more powerful than his comrades.

Once you manage to create a superhero, the game falls into a relatively simple pattern: Send the superhero to conquer an enemy castle, leave him or her there until the newly obtained castle is strong enough to fend for itself, then move the superhero to the next castle, and conquer that one, as well. Along the way you'll need to pause to stock up on troops, and occasionally attack your enemies' heroes just to cut them down to size.

TYPICAL EARLY GAME STRATEGY

Even though each map is different, you'll find that similar strategies work well on all of them. Sometimes a particularly unusual map will force you to modify your strategy somewhat, but in general, this chapter's advice will hold true throughout various missions and campaigns.

Before launching into detailed explanations of typical strategies, we ask that you first consider the golden rule of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**—the golden rule of all grand-scale strategy games, for that matter. No, it isn't "Collect lots of gold," though gold is indeed useful. The rule is this: Expand as quickly as possible without exposing your old territory to attack. Your ability to take just enough troops from each castle to build a conquering army while leaving behind just enough to defend your old castles will largely determine your success. As you play the game more and more, you'll become better acquainted with this balance, and get better and better at striking it perfectly.

Unveiling the Locale

The first thing to do in most scenarios is load up your superhero with all the troops he or she can muster and send them out to explore the immediate vicinity of the castle. Understanding your surroundings is a vital part of the game; that's why you shouldn't get too frustrated if your first attempt to beat a scenario fails miserably. On subsequent tries you'll have a better understanding of the land and the position of each critical resource, which in turn allows you to plan better strategies and seek those resources successfully.

Gathering Resources

An integral part of early gameplay is to secure local resources. These may be temporary resources, such as a pot of mercury, or long-term resources, such as a lumber mill. Be careful when gathering treasure chests, however. Only let the hero who'll eventually become your superhero gather those items initially. This ensures that your superhero gets a good, quick start by gaining levels without dangerous combat.

Don't let your hero get **too** far from your castle during this early stage. You'll want to return by the start of the next week or two to collect extra creatures for your army.

Adding a Second Hero

Often, you'll want to purchase a second hero during your first turn. Assuming you've decided to make your starting hero your superhero, you should relegate this second hero to scout, errand boy, and castle protector.

The second hero's first task is to help expose the map (see Figure 6-3). One of your early disadvantages, compared with computer opponents, is that you don't start the game with a clear view of the world. One of your second

hero's primary tasks is to scour the land and remove the veil of darkness interfering with your ability to make good decisions. This second hero can concentrate on early exploration, freeing your superhero to perform more vital tasks such as collecting experience and pounding on guardian monsters.

The second hero also plays errand boy. He collects resources that have no effect on hero power, adding valuable ore, lumber, and other items to your coffers. Again, this frees your superhero to pursue activities directly related to gaining experience and power.



Figure 6-3. Secondary heroes are useful for scouting and revealing the map.

While your second hero should avoid treasure chests filled with experience points, he **should** pick up convenient artifacts, as he can deliver the best to your superhero at a later time.

Finally, use the second hero as a protector, to flee back into your starting castle when an enemy hero approaches, and to load up on creatures in the castle at the time. Even a low-level hero can mean the difference between losing a castle or staging a successful defense. When your first and second heroes are both busy elsewhere, you might want to buy a third hero to take over the “castle baby-sitter” role.

Knights and Barbarians make ideal second heroes. Barbarians’ great mobility allows them to collect items and unveil the map quickly, while Knights make great castle protectors. Later, if you build high-level Mages’ Guilds in your castle, you’ll find that magic-using heroes become somewhat better for castle protection—especially if you’re lucky enough to buy a hero who starts at Level 2, 3, or 4.

Early Expansion

As a rule of thumb, you should build a new structure in your starting castle every turn, emphasizing creature dwellings whenever possible. Keep it up until you’ve run out of resources or reached a point where the only structures left are those of minimal use (such as Farms). Don’t forget to upgrade your existing buildings!

TIP Whenever feasible, don’t buy castle-defending creatures until there’s a direct threat to your castle. Then, when an enemy hero threatens, use your gold reserves to stock up on defenders. There’s a real advantage to this when you have multiple castles: Instead of spending all your gold on defenders as soon as they become available, you can wait to see which castle comes under attack and **then** purchase defenders at that castle. If you were to buy creatures right away, you’d run the risk of leaving one castle poorly defended, and having insufficient funds to buy a proper defense force when it comes under siege.



Improving your first castle is a good start, but it's not enough. You must expand as soon as humanly possible, and that means taking over another town or castle.

Take over castles instead of towns whenever possible. It doesn't matter if the nearest town happens to be closer at hand than the nearest castle; converting towns to castles requires lots of gold and resources, and towns are vulnerable during the transition. The conquering hero must stay nearby and "baby-sit" towns for several turns after conquest, when he could be out conquering more castles!

On most maps, your superhero will be ready to conquer an enemy castle after he's taken about two weeks' worth of creatures from his starting castle and integrated them into his army. This assumes you've built and upgraded all but the very best creature dwellings, and the hero hasn't taken heavy losses from an earlier battle. It also assumes you can afford to leave your first castle undefended for a little while.

Although your strategy may vary from map to map, the key is not to get bogged down gathering nonessential resources and artifacts. Sure, that Medal of Valor those Fire Elementals guard would be helpful, but if it's a choice between getting it immediately or taking over a castle immediately, always choose the castle. Fighting too many map-based creatures and pursuing too many artifacts or treasure chests can weaken your army, slowing down your castle conquests—and if you don't get enough castles early in the game, you'll fall drastically behind in the amount of gold and creatures your empire produces. When that happens, you're history.

Breaking the Opposition

Sometimes, especially in small-map games, you'll encounter the enemy very early on, perhaps after two or three weeks. At this point, you must ask yourself whether it's worthwhile to face enemy heroes head-on or try to avoid them.

In a game with multiple players, where no particular opponent seems particularly threatening and you have sufficient room to expand, you're usually

better off avoiding those enemy heroes. Just conquer more castles and try to improve your own heroes. But in small games, in situations where one particular opponent keeps harassing you, and especially in games where you face only a single computerized opponent, you'd do well to meet your opponent's best heroes head-on and beat them. If you can do that, you'll take away all the artifacts they've been hoarding and deprive your opponent of lots of troops. This keeps the computerized foe in check, forcing him to rehire the defeated hero or hire a new one, resupply that hero with troops, and generally suck vital resources from his castles. There's also the chance that you can hire the defeated hero later, so keep a close eye on the heroes for sale in your castles! Always hire the enemy's defeated heroes; their experience can be invaluable.

You'll know when you've defeated your opponent's best hero, because you'll usually win a treasure trove of artifacts.

MIDGAME STRATEGY

Midgame strategy in **Heroes of Might and Magic II** is a mad race for castles and towns. Whereas the early game was to some degree concerned with gathering resources, artifacts, and useful items, midgame is where those resources, artifacts, and items are put to good use. You can still grab the occasional resource here and there, especially if one of your building projects requires it, or if it's convenient. But for the most part, during this stage of the game you must devote all your energy to acquiring new castles while defending the old ones. If you don't pursue this strategy, you risk reaching an unwinnable position, where your opponents have such a great gold and creature advantage you can't hope to win, no matter how valiantly you fight.

Castle Hopping

Your main midgame strategy will be "castle hopping." It's a simple technique: Your superhero attacks and takes over an enemy castle, hopefully without losing many of his own troops. You then purchase as many creatures as possible from the new castle and upgrade the castle as much as you can, as quickly as

you can. When you feel the castle is strong enough to hold its own against roving enemy heroes, you send your superhero on to the next conquest.

Of course, castle hopping isn't always that simple. Sometimes you'll have to keep your superhero at the new castle longer than you'd hoped, because he needs to reinforce his troops. Sometimes the new castle is so weak it can't produce enough quality monsters to fend for itself. This usually occurs when the castle is fairly undeveloped, and you don't have the resources to build the best "creature generators" (Laboratories, Pyramids, Cathedrals). In this case, the best you can do is leave your superhero there to hold down the fort, while your other heroes try to gather the resources necessary to build the castle's best structures. Then, when the castle can finally produce Dragons, Titans, Cyclopes, Crusaders, or whatever monster is best, your superhero will be free to leave.

Often you must hire a new hero just to baby-sit the castle. As always, previously defeated Knights and high-level heroes are excellent candidates for castle guard duty.

Guarding Old Territory

An important aspect of the game's middle phase—in fact, of every phase—is protecting your old castles. If your castles all have a full complement of creature generators and you've got the gold and resources to stock them well, then you generally won't have a problem defending them. However, if some of them are rather weak, you'll have to use your superhero to defend them. There are essentially two ways of doing this—warding and baiting.

Warding is where you keep your superhero close to the weak castles while keeping an eye on enemy heroes. If they start to get too close to your weak castles, your superhero can rush back and sit on the castle until the enemy goes away. Warding is a useful strategy when you don't want to incur serious losses: The mere presence of the superhero is usually enough to discourage a fight. It's also an easy strategy to use if your hero has good mobility, and if there's a lot for him or her to do in the vicinity of the weak castle.

However, if your superhero is slow, or if he or she has very little to accomplish in the immediate vicinity, then warding can be self-defeating: It ties up your superhero for extended periods of time when he or she could be raiding new castles, instead.

If warding doesn't work, try baiting. As with warding, baiting involves keeping your superhero close to, but not inside, your weakest castles. Keep him or her at about one full turn's movement from the castle. When a tough enemy hero comes to attack the castle, charge in and crush him with the superhero! This strategy is much better than warding if your superhero's strong enough to survive the battle with minimal casualties. You'll set back your computer opponent, destroying his troops and forcing his hero out for rehire. And because you've removed the closest threat to your weak castle, chances are good it will live to see another week—and another batch of reinforcements from the creature dwellings.

Picking on Enemy Heroes

Even when you aren't actively baiting your opponents, you should attack enemy heroes that happen to be nearby. Although there's usually no point to going out of your way to pick on weaklings, you should always fight weak enemy heroes if they're conveniently close at hand. Stronger heroes often are worth going out of your way to crush—but only if you think you can survive the battle without serious losses.

There's no one rule to cover every situation, but in general you should fight lesser enemy heroes whenever it's convenient, but you shouldn't waste time pursuing them. The computer can purchase a limitless number of weakling heroes, and trying to crush them all is like chasing your own tail: You'll never succeed. It's better to attack the source of the computer's power—its castles. But when it finally comes down to you and just one computer opponent, going after its best heroes can be an excellent idea.



Figure 6-4. You can usually get a good sense of enemy heroes' power by right-clicking on them.

Always right-click on enemy heroes to get an estimate of their power before attacking them (see Figure 6-4).

ENDGAME STRATEGIES

If your midgame strategy has been successful, you'll reach a point where you have a good percentage of the land's castles, and are therefore prepared to hold your own in the game's final stages. If your midgame was unsuccessful, and you don't have as many castles as your enemies, you already might have lost the game, but this won't become clear until the computer starts sending out huge armies you simply can't handle.

Assuming you've indeed carved a sufficient chunk out of the world, you're now prepared for the endgame. In this phase your biggest challenge is to reduce the number of remaining enemy castles to zero. This can be tougher than it was in the midgame, as enemy territory has now been compressed somewhat, and castles tend to be better defended. Furthermore, if you haven't crushed your opponents' superheroes earlier, they're probably quite powerful by now. They usually aren't powerful enough to take on your superhero (if you've been successful in building him up), but they are tough enough to threaten even a well-defended castle. This makes the early endgame a difficult period, indeed.

Huge creatures generally determine endgame outcome. Try to stock up on Dragons, Titans, and other huge monsters that will endure multiple battles. Barbarian, Sorceress, and, to some extent, Knight castles tend to have the most trouble during this period, because they don't create creatures with the same high statistics as other heroes' castles, which produce powerful Dragons and Titans.

Crushing the Biggest Heroes

If you haven't confronted your chief opponent's biggest heroes face to face, you might have to do so at this point. Otherwise those enemy heroes will conquer your castles while you conquer **their** castles, for a meaningless game of "Musical Castles." If your castles are strong enough to ward off the toughest enemy heroes, though, you needn't bother.

Using Critical Mass

If you've managed to destroy all but a few enemy castles, but you're having trouble delivering the deathblow, just be patient. Inspect all your castles in turn and decide which have creatures to spare. Then send your superhero from castle to castle, methodically picking up excess creatures (focusing on the highest-level monsters), meanwhile leaving enough at each castle to keep it safe. Optionally, a lesser hero can take on these collection duties, and deliver the creatures to your superhero.

Once your superhero has reaped the creature benefits of all your castles, he should be able to smite the remaining enemy castles with impunity. If he's still not tough enough, look for places on the map where he can augment his army: Dragon City, Ruins, and so forth.

PULLING OUT THE STOPS (EXPANSION TRICKS)

The foregoing strategies make perfect sense if you're winning, but often you'll find yourself losing anyway, especially at the highest levels of difficulty. What can you do to give yourself an edge?

Though it may seem obvious, one strategy is to play at lower difficulty levels. The Normal and Hard difficulty levels present a good challenge on most maps. If you play at higher levels, you'll find that even the best-laid

plans can go awry. Heck, even the game designers can't beat certain missions consistently at the highest difficulty levels. That should tell you something.

Before you start trimming the difficulty level, though, here are some tricks that can help you succeed. Because the basic difficulty of **Heroes of Might and Magic II** lies in balancing the need to conquer new castles while defending old ones, most of these tricks deal with simplifying that juggling act.

A Knight in Every Castle

In situations where you don't have **quite** enough troops to defend a castle, sometimes an extra hero can make the difference. While a Captain of the Guard is often as good as a Level 1 hero, a Captain of the Guard will never gain levels like a true hero. If you hire a Knight or similarly tough hero to guard your castle, he or she will be capable of advancing in level after successful battles, increasing the castle's battle readiness.

Maintaining Gold Reserves

In the game's middle to late stages, when you have lots of castles, you often can build up substantial cash reserves by not purchasing every creature you can get your hands on. Build all the creature dwellings you can possibly build, but don't buy tons of creatures at each castle: Just buy a reasonable number, and let the rest accumulate. Watch the map closely; when an enemy hero approaches within threatening distance of your castle, **then** stock up on creatures in that castle.

The advantage to keeping a substantial gold reserve is that you can spend it when and where you need to. If you were to buy as many creatures as possible at every castle, you'd soon run out of gold, and when an enemy hero approached your weakest castle, you'd have no way to bolster its defenses. By maintaining healthy gold reserves, however, you can buy creatures where they'll do the most good.

This technique requires that you carefully observe the actions of each enemy hero, and buy creatures right before that hero attacks. If you aren't committed to watching your territory carefully, then you're better off buying creatures at all castles as soon as they become available. That technique will work at the lowest difficulty levels, but we strongly recommend spending the extra effort and watching your territory every turn.

Day-Seven Invasions

You want to invade an enemy castle with your superhero, but you're worried. The castle your superhero sits in lacks a strong army, and you aren't sure what sorts of creatures will be available at the castle you plan to attack. What's a good way to maximize the likelihood of holding on to both castles? The Day-Seven Invasion.

The essence of the Day-Seven Invasion is simple: conquer the enemy castle on the last (seventh) day of the week, then move your superhero inside the new castle and buy a creature dwelling, if possible. Then end your turn. If there are any strong enemy heroes in the vicinity, they'll take this opportunity to ride toward your weakest castle. However, unless those enemy heroes were extremely close, it will take them at least a day to reach the old castle your superhero just left, or the new one he currently occupies. That gives you a turn to prepare, and that's where the advantage of attacking on the seventh day of the week comes into play. Your next turn begins on the first day of a new week, and both castles have a new crop of creatures to hire. Hire as many as possible, and your castles should be safe from invaders.

Of course, the enemy heroes may be so strong they still overwhelm your castle, regardless of the influx of new defenders. In that case you'll know you acted too early; you'll have to reconsider the whole attack, and perhaps wait another week or so. Optionally, you might try to take on enemy heroes directly, with your superhero.

Multiple Saved Games

Heroes of Might and Magic II is fun, but it's not always forgiving. It's entirely possible to get yourself into unwinnable situations. The worst part is you won't always know when the situation is unwinnable: It may take loading up your saved game several times and getting crushed every time. Carefully saving your game in various saved-game slots at various times can take a lot of the sting out of these situations.

Save the game at various times, always under different names. This way you'll always have options: If you're losing badly, you can load an early saved game in hopes of getting back on the right track. If you're doing fine overall, but you lost a recent battle, you can instead load your most recent saved game and try to win the battle again. Some players make a habit of always saving their game under the same file name, obliterating all their old saved positions with every new save. That's a bad idea; if you work your way into a losing position, you're left with no recourse but to start all over.

If you feel saving and reloading constitutes cheating, consider this scenario: You save the game repeatedly to the same saved-game slot, thereby obliterating all but the most recently saved position. Unfortunately for you, the last time you happened to save the game, an enemy hero was making a beeline for your best castle with an overwhelming number of troops. You saved the game exactly one turn before he arrived at your castle, and there's no way you can muster enough defenses in one turn to save the castle. If you could return to an earlier point in the game, you could do something about the situation, such as build more creature generators or move your superhero in to a defensive position. As it is, you're doomed.

The moral of the story is to save often, and under different names.

Saved Game Strength Tests

Saved games are useful for experiments. If you're unsure whether an attack will succeed, you can always save the game before attacking and restore it if

the attack fails. The same thing goes for abandoning your own castles. If you aren't sure whether they can stand on their own, just save the game and move the hero away. If the castle falls, you can always restore the game.

Again, some players view this technique as cheating. If you don't think it's right for you, then you shouldn't use it. However, bear in mind that your computerized opponents have a constant and pervasive knowledge of the relative strengths and weaknesses of each castle and hero in the game. By performing these saved-game strength tests, you're just learning some of the same information your foes already possess. It's food for thought.

Abandoning Weak Castles

While castles are of utmost importance, you should also realize that some castles aren't worth defending. If you take over a castle with very few structures already built inside it, you often face a decision: Try to hang on and build it up, or leave it and go for a better castle. If your superhero is strong and commands a strong army, you might be better off abandoning the castle and attacking a different, more valuable castle. The stronger the castle, the harder it is to conquer, but the easier it is to defend once you've taken it for your own.

If you plan to abandon the castle, make sure to give all its useful troops to a hero. There's no point in leaving creatures to die in a losing castle defense; instead, give them all to a hero, who can put them to good use.

Free Construction

Let's say you own several castles and a strong superhero, but one of your castles is really weak. It doesn't possess enough creature dwellings to generate a good host of defenders. Furthermore, you don't have the special resources you need to build those creature dwellings. What can you do? Maybe you should abandon the castle, as in the foregoing strategy. But wait! What if there were some way to let your opponents build those creature dwellings for you? Nah, they'd never be so helpful. Or would they? Believe it or not, you can some-

times get your foes to help you build up a castle. Here's the best way to do it. (Bear in mind that this technique requires a very strong superhero.)

Remove all the creatures from your weak castle, and give them either to your superhero or to a secondary hero. Let the castle sit completely undefended, and post your superhero close by. Eventually, an enemy hero will prance up and take the castle, unable to resist the allure of a completely empty castle. Ideally, your opponent will take over the castle early in the week (Day One or Two).

If you're lucky, the enemy hero will then drop off a few defenders and leave the castle. If you aren't lucky, he'll stick around. However, you can usually get him to leave by removing all the defenders from one of your **other** castles and luring the enemy hero away.

Regardless of whether the enemy hero sticks around or leaves, you should let several days pass and then repossess the castle (with your superhero) on Day Seven of the current week. If you're lucky, your opponent will have used those four or five days to build important creature dwellings, which are now yours. Congratulations: You just got the enemy to improve your castle!

The importance of attacking on Day Seven is obvious: If you let the enemy keep your castle through the end of the week, he'll be able to buy lots of new defenders on Day One of the following week. Therefore it's best to let your opponent control the castle during the middle part of the week, when he can build new creature dwellings but not benefit from them.

ON TO CHAPTER 7

Chapter 7 moves us from the grand scale to the small scale, examining the best strategies for combat success. You'll find useful tips on combat techniques and complete details of combat mechanics.



CHAPTER 7

Combat

Combat is an important aspect of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. Combat in this game is not overly complicated, but nevertheless, a number of basic tactics can help you maximize your effectiveness. This chapter explores those tactics in detail.

Despite the importance of sound tactics, you'll find the superior army tends to win the battle in **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. Good tactics always help, but the battlefield is a small area with relatively limited options. In other words, don't get your hopes up. You won't be able to stage a glorious victory over a Dragon army by cleverly using your horde of Peasants; everything has limits! But tactics become absolutely vital when you engage in close battles, and it's for the sake of winning those battles that we present this chapter.

RULES OF THE BATTLEFIELD

Combat takes place in a single screen, 11 hexes wide by 9 hexes deep. The hexes are invisible (unless you enable them in the Combat Options screen; see Figure 7-1), but it's nice to know they're present. The size of the battlefield isn't sufficient to make ranged-attack units terribly powerful; a fast opponent can always reach your Archers or Liches in a turn or two, unless there's a prominent obstacle in the way.



Figure 7-1. Enable the grid to get a better sense of what's going on.

Obstacles such as castle walls and dead trees don't affect flying creatures, so tough flying creatures such as Dragons are invaluable during castle sieges. They can soar right over the walls and wreak havoc on enemy forces.

Troops appear from top to bottom on the Combat screen in the same order that they appear from left to right on the Hero screen. That is, the leftmost troops in the Hero screen appear at the top of the Combat screen, and the rightmost troops appear on the bottom of the Combat screen. Use this

knowledge to your advantage, placing vulnerable ranged-attack troops on the edges of your hero's roster with strong close combat attackers to either side. This places the ranged-attack units as far as possible from enemy troops, and ensures they can get instant support from strong nearby units when the bad guys try to swarm them.

The Order of Attack

Which troops get to attack first? Creatures with faster speed ratings always attack before those with slower ratings. Which side gets to start? If both

sides' fastest troops have the same speed, then the side that initiated combat gets to move its fastest troops first.

Speed can make all the difference in the world, or very little difference, depending on the abilities of your opponent's troops. If your opponent's army doesn't possess strong spells or ranged-attack units, then slow troops work just fine—although they usually won't get the first attack in, which can often be a vital factor. But against enemies with great distance attacks or a lethal knock-out punch, you might find yourself wishing your troops were swifter. Speed is also key for spellcasting heroes, who benefit greatly from the ability to cast the first spell in combat.

Damage Calculations

When one unit attacks another, it inflicts a certain amount of damage on its target. How much? Every creature has a Damage rating expressed as a range of damage. To take an easy example, Swordsmen inflict 4 to 6 points of damage. That means every time a Swordsman swings his sword, he'll deal the enemy from 4 to 6 points of damage. The exact number of damage points—4, 5, or 6—is completely random.

Multiply this damage by the number of creatures in the attacking unit, and you'll get a sense of how much damage it can inflict: 10 Swordsmen, each of whom can deal 4–6 Damage individually, can deal 40–60 Damage per attack as a group. This damage is subtracted from the collective hit points of the target unit, and any creatures reduced to zero hit points instantly perish.

But wait! There's more. Attack and Damage ratings also play a part in damage calculations. If the attacking creatures' Attack value is equal to the Defending creatures' Defense value, then Attack and Defense play no part in damage calculations. However, if the attacker's Attack value exceeds the defender's Defense value, then the attacker deals 10 percent more damage than it normally would for every excess point. Confused? Let's look at an example.

Sample Damage Calculations

Let's say 10 Archers shoot at 40 Peasants. The relevant stats for each side are these:

Archers

2–3 Damage

5 Attack

Peasants

1 Defense

1 Hit Point

The Archers do between 2 and 3 Damage per shot. In this case, let's say they get lucky and deal 3 Damage per shot. There are 10 of them, so they'll deal 30 points of damage to the hapless Peasants. Furthermore, when we compare the Archers' Attack rating (5) with the Peasants' Defense rating (1), we find the Archers have a 4-point advantage, for a 40 percent damage bonus. Therefore, instead of dealing just 30 damage points, the Archers' attack will deal 42 Damage (30 + an extra 40 percent of 30—that is, 12). So the Archers' attack deals 42 Damage to the Peasants. Because the Peasants have only 1 hit point apiece—40 hit points for the whole group—the entire squad of Peasants is obliterated! Ouch.

The Effects of Attack and Defense

The 10 percent damage rule does not apply both ways: An attacker with higher Attack than his victim's Defense gets a 10 percent Damage bonus per point of difference, and a defender with better Defense than the attacker's Attack rating sustains 5 percent less damage than usual per point of difference.

This rule has limits. An attack can never deal more than 300 percent, or less than 30 percent, of the attacking unit's unmodified Damage rating. In other words, there are definite limits to how much a unit's Attack or Defense values modify the total amount of damage.

If these limits weren't in effect, a horde of Peasants with an Attack rating of 1 couldn't even **scratch** a creature with a Defense rating of 11, because the 10-point Attack-Defense differential would swallow up fully 100 percent of the Peasants' puny attack. However, thanks to the **30%–300%** rule, the Peasants can always inflict **some** damage on their mighty opponent.

Varying Attack and Defense values explain why the best units in the game, such as Dragons and Titans, are so dominant. You can march an army of 500 Peasants up to a single Green Dragon and attack it, inflicting a lethal base of 500 points—but when you factor in the Dragon's 11-point Defense advantage over the Peasants' Attack rating, you'll understand why the Peasants' attack falls well short of killing the Dragon. Instead of 500 points of Damage, those Peasants will inflict only 30 percent of 500, or 150. That isn't enough to kill the Dragon.

Learn to factor in your troops' Attack and Defense ratings when considering an attack, and you'll be better prepared to predict the results of the battle.

Morale

A unit with high Morale has a chance to get extra attacks, while a unit with low Morale tends to freeze up and lose its turn. What are the odds of these things happening?

If your unit has a +1 Morale rating, the odds of it getting an extra attack are 1 in 24. With +2 Morale, the odds are 1 in 12; with +3 Morale, it's 1 in 8.

The odds of freezing up from low Morale are higher than the odds of getting free attacks for high Morale, so be sure not to let low Morale plague your troops! With –1 Morale, the odds of freezing are 1 in 12; with –2 Morale, the odds are 1 in 6, and with –3 Morale, the odds are 1 in 4. Hey, who said life was fair!

How can you keep up your Morale? If you have lots of Knight heroes, this seldom will be a problem, as their leadership skills come into play. If you own any Necromancers or have taken over a Necromancer castle, think

twice before integrating undead units into an army of normal units. The undead will always remain at normal Morale, but the living units will suffer a penalty when forced to join a group of undead.

Always keep a sharp lookout for Morale-boosting sites and artifacts. They're plentiful, and are usually scattered all over the map.

Luck

During every attack, units with good Luck get a chance to deal guaranteed double damage, while units suffering from bad Luck have a chance to deal only half their typical damage. The chances of receiving these bonuses and penalties are exactly the same as they are with morale; the penalties are significantly easier to attain than the bonuses.

Retaliation

Each unit gets one retaliation attack per turn. That just means that when a unit is attacked at close range, it gets to strike back, even though it isn't that unit's turn.

If multiple units gang up on one lonely unit, though, retaliation isn't such a big factor, because that unit will only be able to retaliate against the first aggressor.

Some units have unlimited retaliation capabilities, and others have special attacks that cannot be retaliated against. Both special abilities are more useful than you might expect, because much of the damage dealt over the course of a typical combat is actually a result of retaliation.

Regeneration

Some units Regenerate; that is, they regain their lost hit points at the end of each round of combat. However, this **doesn't** mean that dead creatures come back to life; it just means that creatures who've sustained damage are automatically healed.

Regeneration is useful in close battles and when fighting lesser opponents, but powerful enemies tend to kill your units outright, so Regeneration typically plays a very small role in combat.

COMBAT OPTIONS

Here's a look at several options available to you during combat. Different players have different opinions about their value; read on to learn our opinions—but take them with a grain of salt.

Spellcasting

If your hero possesses a spellbook, you have the option to cast spells during combat. The effect of spells on combat can be subtle, or they can be quite dramatic. For even a Level 1 hero, having just one spell in his spellbook can mean the difference between victory and defeat.

When considering your combat options, choose your spells wisely. We'll look more closely at the art of effective spellcasting later in this chapter.

Grid and Information Options

To really maximize your awareness of the battlefield, you can turn on a grid overlay that reveals the hexagons making it up. This puts each creatures' move into better perspective, and resolves any questions you might have about a unit's actual position. If you're unsure whether two units are actually adjacent, or you don't know how many hexes away your opponent is, this is the best way to find out.

The Combat Options screen also contains an information window showing all relevant statistics about a selected unit. If you find yourself clicking frequently on each unit to display their attributes, this is a good option to enable.

Auto Combat

Select Auto Combat to let the computer handle both sides of the fight. Of course, the first question on everyone's mind is, **How well does the computer fight for you?** The computer fights well, but you can usually fight somewhat better, especially if your hero knows lots of spells. In ridiculously mismatched battles where you can't help but win, Auto Combat is usually a safe bet. Otherwise, we strongly recommend that you handle combat duties yourself.

Common computer mistakes include casting spells on units that don't really benefit from them; attacking a small group of enemy ranged-attack units when you should cut a huge horde of Goblins, Skeletons, or other "horde" creatures down to size instead; and charging out of the castle to attack the enemy instead of waiting inside while the castle's Ballista wears down the attackers. The bottom line about Auto Combat is that it isn't completely reliable. In Heroes of Might and Magic II, as in life, if you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself.

Retreat and Surrender

Why, you might ask, would you wish to Retreat or Surrender? Well, maybe you never will. If you're the type of player who prefers to reload the game and try again instead of accepting his losses, then these two options will never come into play. If you like to see battles through to the end, however, you'll find these options quite useful.

When you select Retreat, your hero flees and loses his army. You can then rehire him in one of your castles. This is a good option when your hero's army has been whittled down to almost nothing, or when his army isn't worth saving.

Surrender, on the other hand, allows you to keep your hero and his army if you pay ransom to the opposing hero. This option only works when fighting enemy heroes, but it's extremely useful when your hero's army is worth saving. As with Retreat, you must rehire the hero in one of your castles after surrendering in combat.

There are even some occasions when you can use Retreating and Surrendering as cheap-shot tactics. If you have an extremely high-level spell-casting hero, or a hero with lots of fast, long-range attackers such as Titans in his army, you can initiate combat with a foe who's much tougher than you and get in a nasty spell attack (or perhaps some brutal long-range creature attacks), and then immediately Retreat or Surrender, depending on whether your hero's army is worth saving. This is costly, but it allows you to whittle down an opponent's army in emergency situations. Note that this tactic won't really work if your opponent's creatures are faster than yours. In that case, he'll get the first shot in combat, and you'll only hurt yourself.

MAXIMIZING COMBAT EFFICIENCY

We've pointed out that combat in **Heroes of Might and Magic II** isn't rocket science, and there aren't so many tactical options that a vastly inferior army can ever hope to defeat a vastly superior one; most games are won by making smart moves at the strategic level, not by fighting clever battles in the Combat screen. However, there are definitely a number of right and wrong ways to approach combat. This section offers tips for making the most of your battles—or, at the very least, for not making a great mess of things.

Troop Placement

There are several schools of thought regarding troop placement. The prevailing school, however, goes a little bit like this:

Long-Range Formations

If you have a substantial unit of long-range attackers in your army, place them at the top or the bottom edge of the battlefield, which means placing them in the extreme left or right creature slots in the Hero or Castle screen. This is useful for two reasons. First, the bottom corner of the screen shields you from enemies attacking your Archers from several directions. Second, placing your Archers or Trolls in a corner of the screen increases the distance the average enemy unit must travel to reach them.

Next to the long-range attackers place slow-but-powerful units that can defend them. Golems and Ogres serve this role admirably. At the center of the screen, place somewhat faster units that can sweep up or down in a single turn to cover the long-range attackers.



Figure 7-2. Place long-range attackers in the corners, with slow but strong support units to defend them.

This formation maximizes the effectiveness of your long-range attackers (see Figure 7-2). Your close combat units will start combat in a position to shield them, and the edge of the combat screen helps defend them as well.

Of course, this strategy only pays off if your long-range attackers are better than your enemy's. If your opponent has more or better ranged-attack troops, using this configuration makes little sense. In that case, use the following "Melee Formation."

Melee Formation

If your army possesses little long-range punch, you'll probably want to charge right at the enemy in most combat situations, to nullify their long-range attackers. Here's a good way to prepare for this technique.

Place Very Fast or Ultra Fast units at the edges of the screen; after all, they're so fast they can get just about anywhere in a single turn, so you needn't bother placing them in the thick of battle.

Place slow but powerful units at dead center of the screen or, optionally, right next to your most powerful unit. Why? If you have no long-range attackers, then the enemy will tend to charge in and attack your most powerful units. Placing slow support units right next to your most powerful unit negates the slower unit's speed disadvantage, because enemies will automatically charge into the general vicinity.

Charging In vs. Staying Home

At the start of battle, should you charge in or cover up? The rules are simple. If you have lots of quality long-range attackers worth protecting, then gather your other units around to protect them, perhaps sending a single fast unit to harass your enemy's long-range attackers in the meantime. If your long-range attackers are ineffective or inferior, however, and it looks like they'll be chewed up regardless of what you do, then don't worry about them. Charge in and attack the enemy's weak spots.

Getting In the First Attack

The Auto Combat feature is generally competent, but occasionally it does some pretty silly things. For instance, let's say you have a bunch of fast units, and your enemy has lots of equally fast units; none of these units have a long-range attack. Furthermore, these units aren't quite fast enough to run all the way across the battlefield and strike the enemy in a single turn; rather, they're capable of running about halfway across the screen in a single turn.

Because you attacked, you get to move your creatures first. If you allow Auto Combat to take over at this point, there's a good chance it will march all your units halfway across the screen, expending your creatures' movement points and ending their turns. Now your enemy gets a turn; the enemy creatures march up to meet your creatures in the middle of the screen, and because your creatures are in striking range, they get the first attack. Ouch!

In this situation, simply skip your creatures' first turn, watch your opponents rush toward you, and then run out to meet them in the middle of the screen, thereby getting in the first attack. The first attack in combat is extremely valuable in this game. If a horde of 800 Peasants attacks your group of 10 Green Dragons first, they'll **actually kill a Dragon!** But if the Dragons get in the first attack, they'll destroy so many Peasants that the Peasants' Retaliation attack is inconsequential, or nonexistent.

Always, always try to get in the first attack. If that means letting your creatures sit in place for a turn, then do so.

Who to Attack?

Your computer opponents have a very simple set of rules about beating up on your troops: If your army includes any long-range attackers, the computer tries to beat them up first. Next, it beats up on your flyers, and then your most powerful or nearest units. It only deviates from this simple pattern when the creatures it wants to attack aren't conveniently close at hand. In that case, it beats up on any creatures who happen to be conveniently nearby.

Guess what: The computer is on to something here. For the most part, you should follow this same set of rules in combat. Send in someone to disrupt enemy ranged-attack units as soon as possible, because they can't deal full damage when your troops are adjacent. Also, attack the enemy's best units first, because those units can hurt you most. If you don't cut them down to size immediately, they'll play havoc with your troops.

In a few special cases, you should break the rules. Let's say your opponent has 12 Orcs (long-range attackers) and 150 Goblins. In this case, your first priority is to make sure those Goblins don't get in the first attack on your troops. The Orcs are much less of a threat; there are only 12 of them, after all. So send in a fast, tough unit to cut the Goblins down to size, and worry about the other units later. One strong attack will pare those Goblins down to size, but until that attack occurs, the Goblins are a legitimate threat.

Here's another scenario: Your opponent has a formidable unit of 20 Hydras, plus three units with six Mutant Zombies apiece. Who should you attack first? Normally you'd attack the strongest unit (the Hydras) first, but in this case you shouldn't. Clean up the Zombies while avoiding the Hydras. Meanwhile, allow your long-range attackers to shoot at the Hydras, then run away when the Hydras get too close. In this case, its lack of speed nullifies the strongest enemy unit's threat, so you should simply eliminate the faster enemy units and pick apart the strongest unit last.

Gang Attacking

If your opponent has one huge, dangerous unit such as a bunch of Dragons, it's often valuable to let your creatures gang-attack that unit. In simple terms, this means you should have as many creatures as possible attack that unit simultaneously. The benefits of this are twofold. First, the sheer volume of attacks allow you to eliminate the enemy's best unit more swiftly. Perhaps more importantly, though, it allows you to get in several "cheap shots," because unless the unit you're ganging up on has the Unlimited Retaliation special ability, every unit (beyond the first) that attacks needn't fear a damaging Retaliation.

For this second reason, gang attacking is useful in a variety of situations. Even if your opponent's army has no clearly superior group of creatures, you can benefit from singling out one strong unit and crushing it with several of your own.

Using the Attack Arrow to Best Effect

The Attack Arrow, which looks like a sword cursor, allows you to attack your enemy from a variety of angles. Sometimes this is important, and other times it isn't.

In general, you can use the Attack Arrow to good effect in two situations: First, if you have a creature with a special attack. For example, Dragons' breath attacks extend for two hexes; by attacking enemy creatures from a specific angle, you can sometimes fry two units for the price of one. (Similarly, if you aren't careful, you can end up damaging both the enemy and a friendly unit that happens to be standing too close. So beware!) Second, when your units aren't terribly fast. Send your fastest units to attack the enemy from a strange angle—maybe from behind—so your slower units can walk right up and attack from their natural angle. Otherwise you can end up blocking your own units, and that's just silly.

Using Battlefield Terrain

The two main kinds of obstacles you'll encounter on the battlefield are terrain features and castle walls. Both make the battlefield more hospitable for flying and ranged-attack creatures. Between these two types of obstacle, only castle walls tend to have a serious effect on battle, because truly fast units can get around most terrain features with ease. Only a solid castle wall, perhaps with a Moat thrown in for good measure, can reliably give one side the advantage.



Figure 7-3. It's the first round of combat, and the walls are already breached. Walls are no substitute for a good army.

Castle walls protect the creatures inside them by halving the damage from long-range attackers (see Figure 7-3). Furthermore, castles' Ballistas and Turrets aid the defender. But don't be fooled into thinking castle walls can substitute for a strong army.

Smart Spellcasting

Smart spellcasting is a matter of situational awareness: You must have a firm grasp of what you're trying to accomplish and of your spellcaster's limitations before starting to sling spells. The next chapter explores spells

in greater depth, but the following useful tips might help you when you're spellcasting.

- Low-level spellcasters should stick with spells that alter creature abilities, and avoid spells that inflict damage on the enemy. Why? Low-level spellcasters don't have the raw Spell Power to cast effective damaging spells. Good low-level spells include Bless, Curse, Stoneskin, Steelskin, and Blood Lust.
- Low-level spellcasters shouldn't cast spells until they're needed. Casting Bless on a creature that's too slow to enter combat this round partially wastes the Bless spell. Low-level heroes' spells don't last too long, so they should usually cast them right before a creature attacks.

- Area-effect spells that deal a little damage to several units typically aren't as useful as concentrated spells that really hammer a single unit.

THE GAME'S BEST TROOPS

All right folks, this is what you've been waiting for. Here's where we give our opinions regarding the best and worst creatures in the game. We base these opinions both on data from Chapter 4 and on many hours of playing **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. Bear in mind that the following comments are little more than opinions, and your experiences with different creature types may differ dramatically.

Black Dragons and Titans are simply incredible, and should be your units of choice in the game's later stages. Giants aren't very impressive; upgrade them at all costs. Even non-upgraded (Green) Dragons can be effective in your army, however. The beauty of these units lies not only in their power, but also in their great durability. You can fight battle after battle after battle, and never lose a single Dragon or Titan.

Minotaur Kings are extremely solid, and you can build up a large group of them quickly. This makes them real favorites for all tasks—sieges, defense, you name it. Unicorns are almost as impressive.

We really like Champions because of their speed. Any Ultra Fast creature is useful, because it can almost always get in the first attack (unless you're sieging a castle, or an opponent with Ultra Fast creatures attacks you first). Ultra Fast creatures also help you fire the first spell in combat, which is often quite important.

Phoenixes can be very useful because of their great speed; you just have to make sure you use that speed to best effect. If you don't have a powerful spell-caster who can augment the Phoenix's combat abilities with spells before it attacks, then you'd be better off with Dragons.

Which units disappoint us? Cyclopes really don't make the grade in the later stages of the game. Zombies—even upgraded ones—are pretty feeble, as well.

Also, it's been our experience that high-level ranged-attack units (except the Titan) really don't seem to live up to their billing. There's nothing **wrong** with Power Liches, Greater Druids, Archmages, and Trolls, but if it's a choice between them or a group of melee-attacking Level 4 or 5 creatures, we usually pick the melee attackers—Champions, Unicorns, or even the sluggish Hydra. Why? Ranged-attack units are just too fragile. They're great for picking on weaker armies, but enemies with big, fast units like Dragons or Cavalry can easily pick them apart. Furthermore, when fighting against potent spell-casting heroes, your ranged-attack creatures are vulnerable to Lightning Bolts and other direct damage, while your more durable close-combat troops tend to weather these spells better.

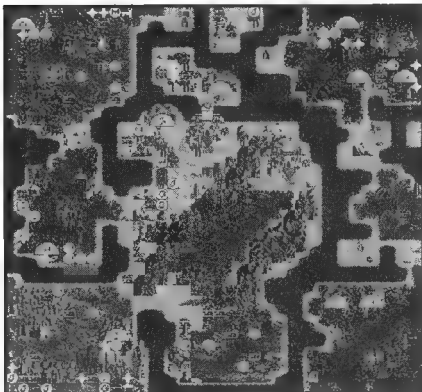
Bear in mind that these are just our opinions. Don't simply accept them as fact; get out there and experiment with every unit you can get your hands on. After all, your fighting style might emphasize troops we don't care for. A Knight with maximum Archery skill, for example, could be a real wrecking machine when loaded with the Liches, Archmages, and Druids we just admitted we don't like. Experiment: that's the only way you'll improve your game.



CHAPTER 8

Expansion Standard Scenarios

ARRAX THE JERK



Small

2 Players

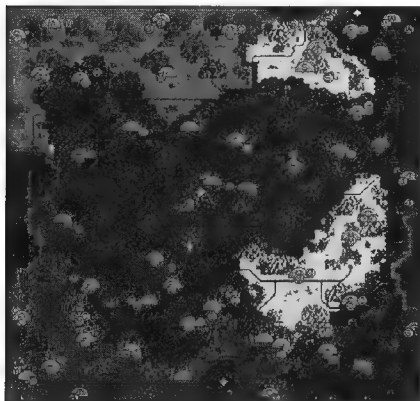
Normal Difficulty

Although this map is small, it's full of resources and creatures. Spend the first week or two building up your army. Don't attack any of the groups of creatures on the map until you're ready for a fight. Your castle is located in the center of the map; your

opponent's castle lies on the other side of the mountains, to the east. A Tax Lien from your opponent costs you 250 Gold per turn, so hire a hero you don't want to keep, give him or her the Tax Lien, and send the hero off to die.

Even though the Red player's castle is close to your own, you must circle the map to arrive at the gates. Head west and then north to capture the town of Big Oak. The portal east of the town transports you to the northeast corner and the town of Illi. After you capture it, move your main hero south to the town of Acer. Board the ship that waits along the coast and sail to the island at the north-central edge of the map. Here you find the Red traveler's tent and get the password you need to get through the Red barrier. Before you attack Arrax Castle, build up your army and dig up the superartifact. (Find it by visiting each of the Obelisks.)

CARMINE



Medium

3 Players

Hard Difficulty

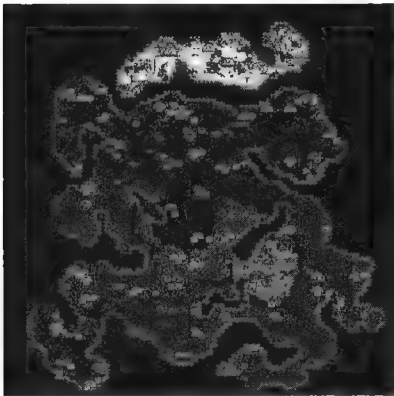
You begin with two castles in the south. Send your first hero north from the westernmost castle to find a gold mine and gather resources; then hire a second hero at this castle and send him or her south to gather, as well. At your easternmost castle, hire a hero and then head north to a jail and free a Knight, who gratefully joins your cause. Send the Knight east to capture a town, and then secure another gold mine along the eastern edge of the map. Have the other hero gather and scout the area around the eastern castle.

As your heroes seek riches, upgrade your castles and build armies. Avoid the few creatures that exist in the south until after you reinforce your armies,

at least. Once you have a daily income of at least 5,000 Gold and have cleared the southern area of the map, designate two of your heroes as your main armies. (I would choose your initial hero and the rescued Knight.)

Your objective is to destroy the Red player, who has four castles—in the east, just north of your castle; at the center of the map; at the north center; and in the northwest. Capture them in that order. After you have the first castle, link up with your ally, the Green player, whose castle lies in the northeast. This allows each of you to protect the other's flank and further box in the Red player. There are no special tricks to victory, just patience and winning several large battles. Crusaders definitely come in handy in this scenario.

DECISIONS



Large

4 Players

Normal Difficulty

Each player begins with one town and several heroes scattered all over the map. Don't worry about an early attack. Build the town into a castle and hire several heroes when you can. Have all heroes explore and gather resources. Meanwhile, improve your castle by adding new structures that produce monsters.

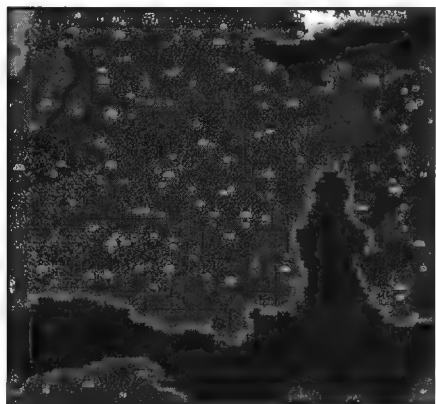
After you build two or three weeks worth of creatures in your castle, have a hero pick them up and gain control of the peninsula to the west. The only path to this peninsula passes by your castle, so you'll be able to block any other players trying to get there. After taking the peninsula, turn the town there into a castle.

Next, use the portal west of your home castle to reach the frozen island in the north. Conquer it as you did the peninsula and turn the towns into castles. By now you should have enough creatures to attack the Green player to

the east. A two-pronged attack is possible using the portal on the east end of the frozen island.

Finally, head south with your superhero and defeat the Red and Yellow players. There are several paths going south, so don't let the Red and Yellow players sneak around behind you as you attack them.

DOMINION



Extra Large

6 Players

Normal Difficulty

It's a big land and you'll need many heroes to conquer it. In the beginning, focus on creating several heroes (rather than one superhero) who can capture neutral castles and towns. Each player begins with one castle, and the map is filled with these neutral communities. The trick is to expand as quickly as possible. The nearest town is to the

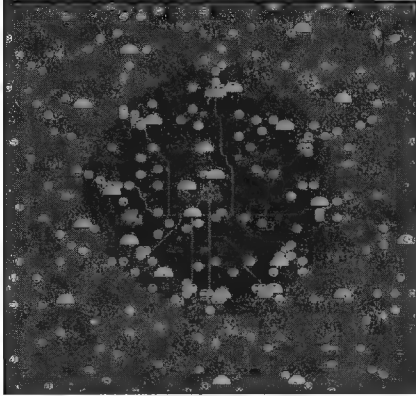
east, another lies farther away to the west.

You'll need ore to turn these towns into castles. Ore mines exist to the west and northwest, and there's a trading post before the western ore mine. Beyond the trading post lies the Green castle, your nearest neighbor.

Enemy castles roughly encircle you. Across the ocean to the southwest is the Orange player, to the east is the Yellow player and to the west is the Green player. Conquer the Green player first and then attack the Yellow and Orange players. As you conquer these folk, keep a watch on the many routes

enemy heroes may use to attack. Let the guardian creatures blocking these paths defend your lands until you're ready to advance in that direction.

DRAGON'S EYE



Medium

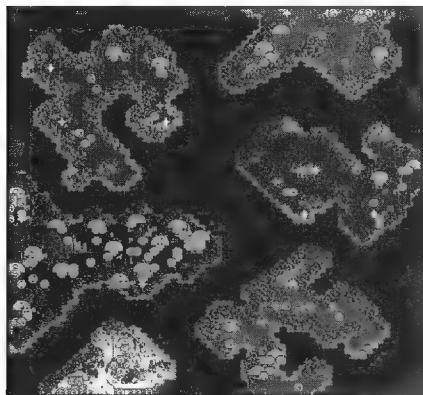
6 Players

Normal Difficulty

This is an interesting scenario. You begin in the middle of the map, surrounded by your enemies. Send your initial hero out to gather resources, and hire at least one other hero to assist in clearing the volcanic area around your castle. Several mines exist that will provide resources (such as gold) you need to build a big army quickly. Once one of your enemies opens a pass through the mountains surrounding your territory, you must garrison your castle with a strong force. If you lose Meramec, the game's over for you.

When you're ready to begin your advance to gain new lands, head east. Your first target is Sansobar Castle. Once this is under your control, capture the southeast quadrant of the map: While defending your western border, have your main hero with the largest army invade the northeast and then clear the remainder of the map in a counterclockwise direction. As you capture towns and castles and can afford to build more armies, send a few around clockwise, as well. The key to this scenario is to hire as many heroes as you need to ferry troops and gather resources. This is only a medium map, but the logistics you learn here will come in handy for large and extra-large maps.

FOOL'S GOLD



Medium

5 Players

Normal Difficulty

In this scenario, you can choose not only the type of hero you'll begin with, but also one of five colors. Each color controls one island. Green begins in the northwest, Blue in the northeast, Red in the central east, Purple in the southeast, and Yellow in the southwest. A west-central volcanic island offers many treasures and resources.

To win, you must defeat all the other players by capturing their towns and castles. I suggest playing as Blue. Although each player has a boat anchored at their island, Blue begins with it right next to its castle. The others must fight a few creatures to get to their boats.

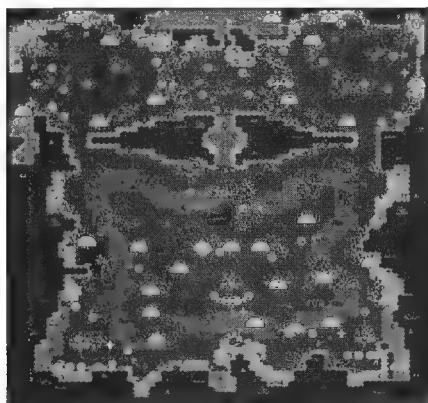
The key to victory is to take to the seas as quickly as possible. Load your first hero aboard the boat and sail for the west-central part of the map. Pick up any sailors, chests, or flotsam you find along the way for extra gold, wood, and artifacts. At the volcanic island, gather all the resources you can without fighting, because your army is very weak. Hire another hero to clear your home island.

As soon as you can afford it, build another ship and hire a third hero to scout the remainder of the map. Gather resources on the sea; if you see treasure on the shore of an enemy island, land to pick it up and then get back on your boat. You may want to have one or two more of your sea scouts do the same thing. This way, you not only gain items, but deny them to your enemies.

Build up a strong army on your home island and send it to the volcanic island to defeat the creatures guarding the remaining treasures. Send reinforce-

ments to keep this army strong while you build up another couple of armies at home. Use one to defend your island and the other to invade enemy islands. After capturing an island, hire a hero to defend it while your invading army continues to the next island.

FOR HONOR



Medium

6 Players

Normal Difficulty

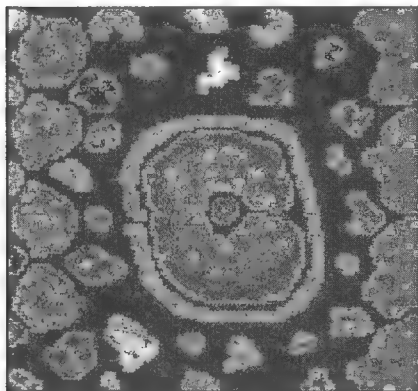
You and your two allies begin with a single castle each. Your allies, Red and Blue, aren't terribly helpful. Although they attack and kill the occasional enemy hero, they steal your mines, as well. Build heroes and steal their mines. You'll have time to do this and explore the northern section of the map before the enemy shows up.

Your primary goal is to free the two prisoners mentioned at the start of the game. The aqua tent is undefended in the top-center of the map. The gold tent lies just below it. When you free the heroes, create a superhero by moving all the troops to the best prisoner hero. Send the other hero back to your home castle to gather more troops. These two heroes will be your main offensive weapons.

March the superhero south to conquer the enemy castles. The combined might of both prisoners' troops makes him unbeatable. Be sure to garrison each castle before this hero leaves, as the enemy will try to retake it.

The other prisoner hero should build up a strong force of units from your home castle and defend the northern lands against enemy incursions. Finally, have a secondary hero follow the two superheroes and claim mines and treasure. This saves time and allows the superhero to be more mobile.

FORTRESS ISLE



Large

6 Players

Normal Difficulty

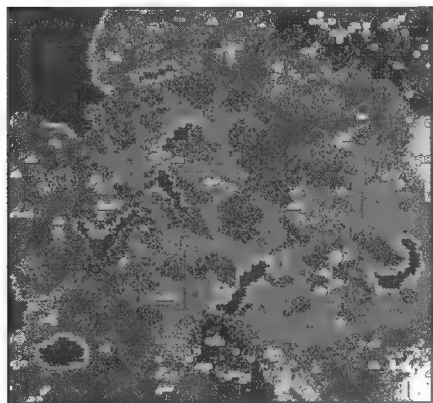
This scenario has three phases: The first finds you jumping through portals from island to island. Your destinations are random, and there are so many portals it's difficult to return to your home island. Because you can't go back for reinforcements once you leave, send your heroes out with enough force to survive. A week or two worth of creatures should be enough. Also, leave some units home to defend against an enemy transporting to your island.

There are several Necromancer towns to capture and fully develop. The building requires a lot of wood, which is in short supply. Build Marketplaces wherever you can to get the cheapest prices for wood.

The second phase finds you building boats and sailing to all the islands that don't have portals. They hold a lot of treasure and goodies, but reaching them all can take a long time. Send several boats out to cut down on the time.

As you explore the seas, build a large force of Bone Dragons. When you're ready, sail to the island in the center of the map and begin the scenario's final phase. At this point it's a matter of moving your large army from castle to castle. Have a secondary hero bring reinforcements if losses become too great.

FULL HOUSE



Extra Large

6 Players

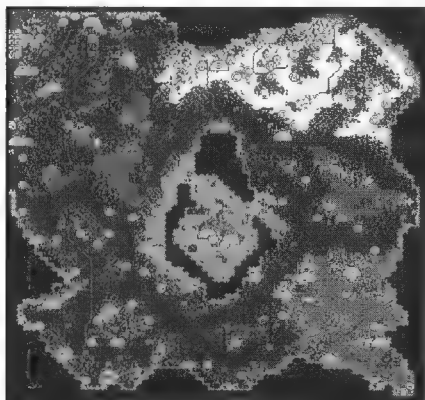
Normal Difficulty

You begin with five castles right next to each other. They generate piles of cash but finding the resources to build so many structures is difficult. Early on, build Statues for extra income. Later, build Thieves' Guilds and Marketplaces. The map has many mines, but they won't cover your needs as you develop your castles. Use the Marketplaces to cover the shortfalls. Pick your two favorite castles as your main ones and focus building in them. I recommend the Wizard castle and the Sorceress castle. You won't have the resources to fully develop the other castles until much later, but do build the structures that don't require resources.

As you build, send out heroes to explore the map. There's a lot of land and many pathways, so seven or more heroes is good. Don't worry about creating a superhero. Instead, focus on claiming as many mines as possible. Also, don't let all the wealth and power go to your head. The other players will all have very powerful forces, too.

The Yellow player lies to the northeast and is closest to your starting position. Plan to attack Yellow when you're producing Level 6 monsters in one of your castles. When you reach the Yellow castles, attack the one with the same creatures as your hero. This way he can get reinforcements while surrounded by the enemy. Build the newly conquered castle's structures, but don't worry about upgrading them—you'll be able to upgrade your creatures if your original castle has the upgraded structure. After defeating Yellow, move on to the next player, and the next, until you've conquered the entire map.

GREED



Medium

4 Players

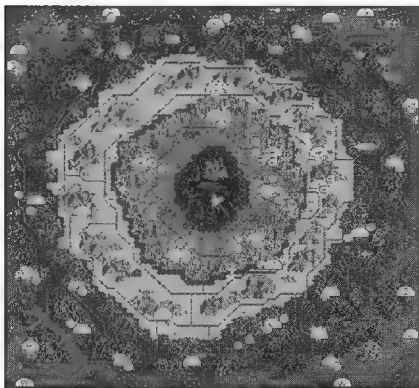
Normal Difficulty

In this scenario, you may choose to be Necromancer, Sorceress, or Warlock, beginning in the southwest, southeast, and northeast, respectively. Each also has a town near the Wizard's castle in the northwest. I suggest playing the Necromancer, because this location is the easiest to defend.

Begin garrisoning your northern castle as soon as possible, and build an army there to begin clearing the northwest area while your southern army clears the southwest. This done, move your southern army east to attack the Green player while your northern army captures all opposing players' towns in the northwest, and then the Wizard's castle. Remember to use less-experienced heroes to transport reinforcements to your fighting armies.

Finally, invade the northeast. Once you've defeated the Yellow player, victory is yours.

GROUND ZERO



Medium

4 Players

Normal Difficulty

Your goal is to capture the castle in the center of the map. Although the three other players have the same objective, don't worry about getting there too late. Hydras and Dragons protect the central castle, so it will be awhile before anyone creates the kind of army that can overcome so strong a force.

Concentric rings of mountains surround the central castle. The wasteland ring next to it is full of resources and mines: You definitely want to get *there* first. Unfortunately, all the passes through the mountains are guarded. Explore the passes as you claim mines and resources, because some passes are less well-defended than others.

After you've claimed the wasteland ring, attack one of your neighbors. Consider the kind of castle they have and which Level 6 monster it will produce. You may want to use your neighbor's Level 6 monster type rather than your own. Also, because the route home can be long, develop a system of heroes to ferry reinforcements to your superhero.

GUARDIAN WAR



Medium

5 Players

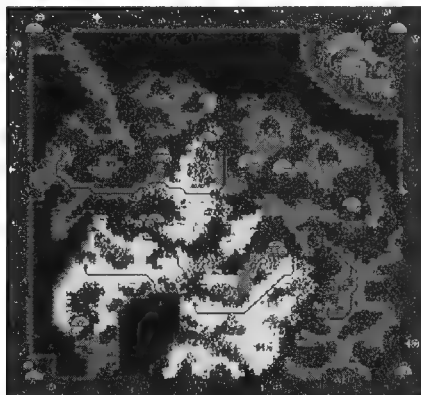
Normal Difficulty

This is a tough one. You and your Green ally begin with two castles and four mines. Your three opponents have five castles or towns and access to 17 mines. Gold is in short supply in the beginning, as are most of the other resources. The one bit of good news is you'll have plenty of time to explore and improve your position before you are attacked.

Build a Statue early for the extra income and a second hero to help you explore. Green territory lies two portal jumps away. Claim his mines and eventually conquer his castle. You'll make much better use of it than the Green player ever will.

Don't waste precious money building up the Green castle's structure. All your opponents will have strong armies, so put most of your effort into creating the strongest possible army for your superhero. For the same reason, try to preserve your troops whenever possible. Don't risk them in needless attacks or evenly matched combat.

HAIL UNICORNS!



Medium

3 Players

Normal Difficulty

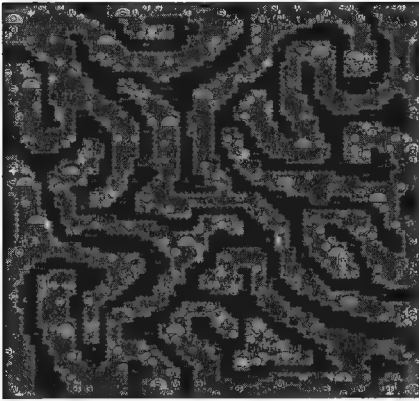
This scenario rewards aggression. All players begin with the same setup—a castle, a town, a nearby ore mine, a Sprite Tree, and a Windmill. If you get the jump on your opponents and keep the pressure up, they'll quickly lose.

Upgrade your monster-producing structures, and send your main hero off with a week's production and the fruit of the Sprite Tree. Don't leave behind any defenders, as the other players don't use the portals until later in the game. Even if they do, and they get lucky and find your castle, you still have your town and main hero to recapture it.

Portal-hopping is this map's commonest mode of travel. Unfortunately, it's random and can get frustrating. Teleport your main hero around until he or she finds another player or a boat. If it's another player, attack. You'll be the stronger, because the other player either will have split his or her forces or not yet built them all. If you discover a boat, sail it until you find enemy shores. If the boat's in the wrong sea area, use the Whirlpool to transport your boat to the right one.

After creating another week's monsters, send them through the portals to find and reinforce your superhero. If they find a boat instead, have them sail to the superhero and hand over the boat and reinforcements.

ISLE MAZE



Medium

5 Players

Normal Difficulty

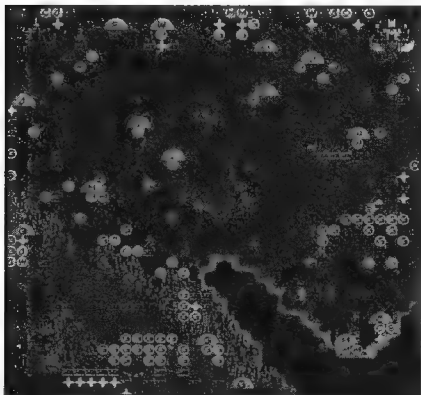
The landscape truly dominates this scenario. Although it's a medium-sized map, its many islands feature tortuous twists and curves. This means it takes a very long time to get anywhere. In fact, this scenario may take you longer than a large-mapped scenario would.

Because none of the castles produce shipyards, portals to random destinations are the primary mode of getting from island to island. Although this randomness makes organizing a strong offensive difficult for you, your opponents find it **impossible**. Therefore, your hero rarely will meet someone else's.

In the beginning, your goal is to get to the small island with the Dragon City. Reach it via the domed portals. The three boats docked at the island are invaluable. Using them, you can harvest all the floating goodies, move more quickly around the map, and ferry reinforcements to your main heroes.

With the boats sailing to every Obelisk, adding pieces to the puzzle, you may never fight an enemy hero throughout the scenario.

KING OF DEATH



Small

3 Players

Normal Difficulty

Treasure and gold literally cover this map. The fortune around your beginning castle pales in comparison to the thick blanket of goodies covering Red's desert kingdom. Your first challenge is to avoid the Red Knight, starting just south of your castle. His army is stronger than yours. Leave your castle for short trips for the first week. Using the creatures you produce during the first few days, you can defeat this pesky fellow.

Although it's a small map, it takes awhile to conquer it. Recruit a secondary hero to gather resources while your superhero claims all the treasure as experience and fights the many guardian creatures. Try to gather all of this map's many great artifacts, and make your magic-using heroes dangerous fighters.

When you're ready, go to the treasure-strewn valley south of your castle. If Red hasn't defeated the Green player, you should. Then, when you're ready to face the Red player, be prepared to deal with the Bone Dragons most Red armies use.

MAGIC THREE



Medium

3 Players

Easy Difficulty

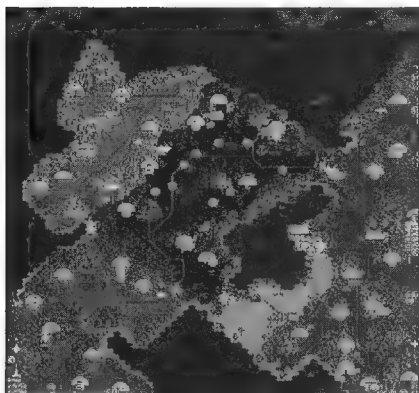
This is a very fun scenario. Instead of just capturing all the castles and destroying armies, it's a race to find a very valuable artifact.

You begin in the central north, on a volcanic island. While you build up your castle, begin your quest at the northern Obelisk. Once you've secured all the resources and treasure there, sail east to the northeastern Obelisk. Hire some additional heroes to transport reinforcements to your main army, which must now travel due south to a third Obelisk. Capture a couple of towns along the way for additional gold and troop reinforcements.

As your main army moves south, send a second army northwest by boat to visit a fourth Obelisk. Move this army south, as well—to capture a couple of towns, or at least to gather some resources. The fifth Obelisk is on the southern desert island. Land your main army in the northwest corner of the island, quickly move southeast to the Obelisk, and then return to the boat. Now set sail for the island to your immediate north. (Don't take time to battle enemy armies; this only wastes precious time.)

Land on the southern shore of this swamp island. Take the boat you find on the lake to the Obelisk in the east, where you learn the location of the artifact. Travel there as quickly as possible. Dig up the artifact, and the game ends in victory.

NEW ENEMIES



Medium

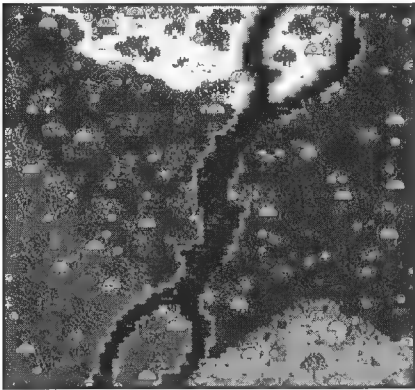
5 Players

Normal Difficulty

In this scenario, you may play as either Blue or Green, and even choose the hero type you begin with. Blue begins in the northeast and Green in the southeast. Blue's in a swamp that will slow your movement, but a lot of gold lies nearby. Green is the easier choice. Your territory is good ground that allows for quick movement. You can capture the town to your east with a small army. Portals exist in the northeast and southeast corners of the map. Use these to teleport from one corner to the other and back again, grabbing some of your allies' treasures before he or she can get to them.

Your enemies lie to the west. Because both beginning castles are near water, it's a good idea to keep them garrisoned against an amphibious attack. Once you've cleared your territory of resources and treasures, begin marching west. Take a strong army, and use lesser heroes to shuttle reinforcements to the front. There are no tricks to victory in this scenario. Advance cautiously, and always try to overwhelm your opponents to minimize your own casualties. The Ultimate Artifact in this scenario lies in the central southwest of the map, just south of the fountain between Pig's Eye and Blackford.

NORTH VS. SOUTH



Medium

4 Players

Normal Difficulty

You begin in the north on a small island with two mines and not much else. Build a boat and a strong army while you explore the island. After two weeks, take the entire army south and conquer the island with the Red castle—one of two enemy sites that can build boats. The other site is the neutral town in the middle of the map, next to the river

dock. In capturing both you insure that the enemy can never build a boat to cross the river. Protect that town well.

Once you've secured the river, victory is almost assured. Capture and develop the neutral towns on the west side of the river. Conquering the Green player prevents him from stealing your mines (and puts his castle to better use). At this point, Yellow will have three castles or towns to your seven castles. When your forces are ready, land in the north, on Yellow's side of the river. March south, sweeping away everything before you.

PEASANTS



Medium

4 Players

Normal Difficulty

At the beginning of this scenario you may choose to be a Knight as the Green player, a Wizard as Red, or a Necromancer as Purple. Green's castle lies on the west-central map edge, Red's in the southwest, and Purple's in the southeast. The Yellow player, a Sorceress, is located in the northwest.

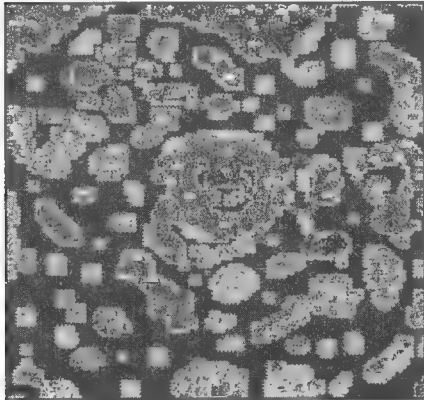
To win, you need only capture the castle at Westfork, in the northeast. Which you choose depends on the type of hero you favor. They're all equally balanced. No matter what color you choose, begin scouting, gathering resources and treasure, while building up your castle and army. As the number of troops in your main army grows, expand your territory.

Although your mission is only to capture the enemy castle in the northeast, you must capture your opponents' castles first. If you play Purple, invade west first, and then north. The Red player should invade west first, as well, while defending the northern frontier, and then conquer the northwest. Green should take out Yellow in the north, and then head south, and finally east.

Once you've defeated all your opponents, you no longer need worry about garrisoning your castles or defending your mines. Some very powerful creatures guard the path to Westfork. A good strategy is to send weaker heroes to battle first, to cause some casualties, before sending in your main

fighting army and the hero with all the experience and artifacts. Use additional heroes to bring troops to the front from your various castles. The Ultimate Artifact definitely will come in handy, so do your best to find it.

PIRATE UTOPIA



Extra Large

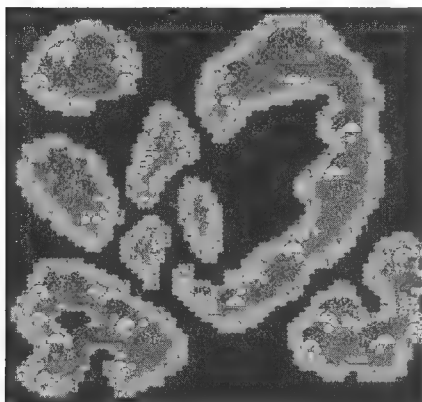
6 Players

Normal Difficulty

To win this scenario, you must find the buried treasure—the Ultimate Artifact. You can choose to play as one of five colors. Blue begins in the northwest, Red north-center, Green northeast, Yellow east-center, and Orange west-center. Blue begins with one castle and three heroes scattered about the map; Green and Orange with a castle, town, and one hero each; Red and Yellow with a castle and a hero each. Each player is equal to the others despite these differences, so choose any of them. Although the scenario's objective doesn't include capturing enemy castles, if you come across one while exploring with a strong army, take it, as it will supply you with more gold and troops.

The map is full of small islands. Obelisks are scattered around the map. Most are near water, so the best strategy is to build a fleet of boats and hire heroes to sail them around seeking these clues to the buried treasure's location. Several portals will teleport your heroes around the map, as well. Use these as often as possible.

PORTALS



Medium

4 Players

Normal Difficulty

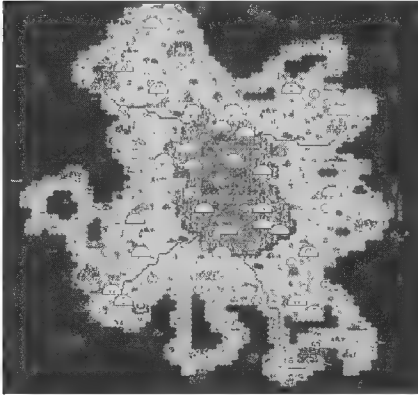
This scenario requires a slow, methodical approach. You begin in the north part of an island in the western half of the map. To the west of your first castle lie some portals. Watch them carefully: This is where enemy armies will appear on your island.

Your first duty is to secure the island, including the two towns in the south. Upgrade these to castles, and begin building structures and a good-sized army. Keep Castle Alamar garrisoned with troops at all times. The enemy armies can move very quickly and can attack this castle in the same turn that they teleport to your island.

To begin with, create two armies, both well-armed. While one stays behind to defend your island, send the other to harass the enemies' castles and to scout the territory. Unlike most scenarios, these portals send you to a random destination each time, rather than the same one. As your mobile army wreaks havoc, build a third army. When it's strong, send it through the portals to invade and hold another castle.

Build a strong garrison to defend each castle you capture before invading to the next enemy castle. This may seem like a slow way to play the game, but it actually results in a quicker victory than leaving your castles undefended and continually recapturing them from the enemy.

SANDS OF TIME



Medium

4 Players

Normal Difficulty

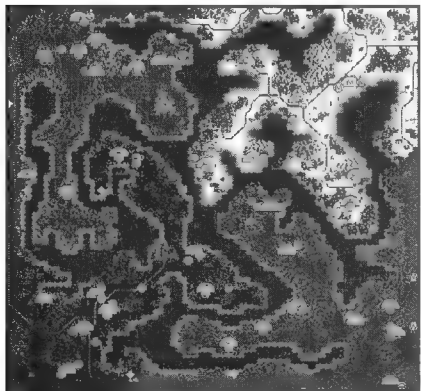
Each of the four players begins with a single castle near a corner of the map. A neutral town lies near each castle. As your first hero explores the area around your castle, send a second hero due east. There's a boat available on the eastern side of the desert. Use the boat to sail around the map, gathering all the goodies floating in the water. The four

Observation Towers on the coast together provide a view of the whole map.

After a week or two of producing creatures, capture the neutral town to the northeast. Make it a castle for its income, as gold is in short supply on this map. Also collect Genies from the many lamps you find in the desert. They're more powerful than the monsters you produce in the beginning.

You need not rush to the center of the map, as the introduction suggests. Guardian creatures protect well the mines and treasure in the central valley. In fact, it's easier to ignore the valley and conquer the other players directly. Use a boat to quickly transport your superhero next to the Green castle. Having removed the Green player from the game, move on to the other two players and defeat them similarly.

SEASONS CHANGE



Medium

4 Players

Normal Difficulty

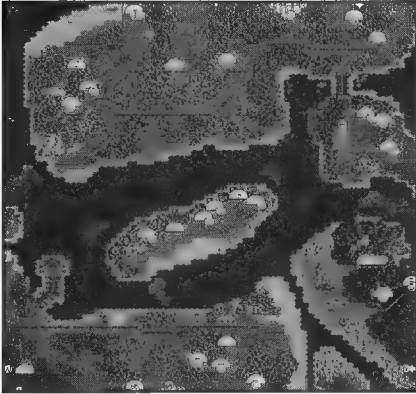
This is a quick and fun scenario. There are a lot of mines and resources and not many guardian monsters. Furthermore, the enemy is far away and you'll be on the offensive throughout the scenario.

First, have two heroes explore your kingdom. After the first week, assign troops to one hero and attack the weak guardian creatures. Let the other hero follow and grab the goodies.

A road circles the map's entire outer edge. A peninsula with one castle on it extends from each corner toward the center. When you finish collecting everything from your area, either march around the map cleaning up opponents, or use the portal found near each corner of the map. The portal sends the hero to another randomly selected portal, making it difficult to reinforce your superhero's troops.

Last, don't bother building Level 6 monsters or the structures that produce them. They cost too much and the opposition isn't strong enough to warrant the expense. Large numbers of your other monsters will do fine in this scenario.

SHARKANIA



Medium

5 Players

Normal Difficulty

As in other scenarios, this one allows you to choose from one of four players, as well as the type of hero you begin the game with. Orange begins in the northwest, Green northeast, Purple southeast, and Yellow south-center.

The objective is to capture Castle Sharkania, on the island in the middle of the map. I suggest playing as any color but Purple. All the others are fairly equal. In the center along the western edge of the map lies a small island with a jail on it. If you go there, you can set a hero free who will gladly join your cause.

The strategy for this scenario is rather simple: Send your hero out to gather treasure and resources while you build up an army. Once you have a strong army, send this hero to Sharkania and attack the castle. If you're losing, retreat before your last creature dies. Then rehire the hero, his experience and artifacts intact, at your castle. Put together another army and repeat the process. Remember to keep a garrison at your castle to defend against the other players.

SKIRMISH



Small

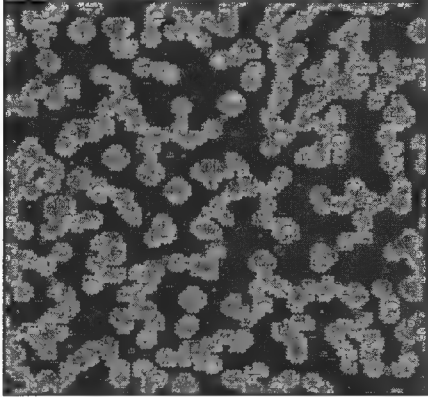
2 Players

Normal Difficulty

This is a very short, balanced scenario. You begin with a Knight and a Knight's Castle in the northeast-center of the map. Your opponent, a Sorceress, begins in the southwest-center. A mountain range runs down the middle of the map, dividing your two territories. You can invade the other player's half by traveling north or south of the mountains, or by deactivating the aqua barrier in the mountain pass in the center of the map. Leave this barrier in place until you're ready to invade.

First, send your hero around your territory to gather resources and treasures, and to scout the terrain. A gold mine lies south of your castle, so grab it as quickly as possible (while staying close enough to defend your castle against attack). The enemy can gather resources and take control of mines far more easily than you, allowing for larger armies in the beginning. The key here is to play defensively until you're strong enough to go straight for the enemy castle and take the Yellow player out of the game.

SURF AND TURF



Extra Large

6 Players

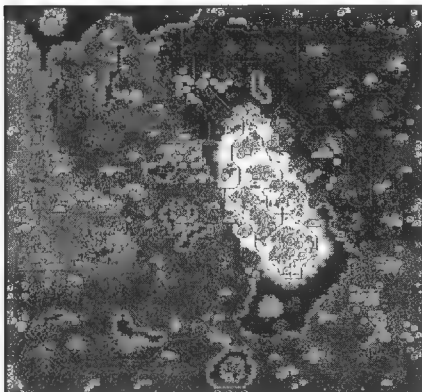
Hard Difficulty

This is another scenario with many small islands scattered about the map. You may play as one of six colors. Blue begins in the southwest, green southeast, Red west-center, Yellow center, Orange northeast, and Purple northwest. All are equal, so choose any. Your objective is to defeat all your enemies and capture their towns and castles.

For this scenario, you must build several boats and have heroes sail around the map exploring and gathering resources. As this goes on, build up a strong army for attacking creatures and enemy armies, and for capturing the many towns scattered about the map. Take advantage of the several portals. Keep your towns and castles garrisoned: You never know when an invading army will land on your shores.

The main strategy is to locate enemy castles, capture them, and then defend them while moving on to the next castle.

TERRAIN WARS



Large

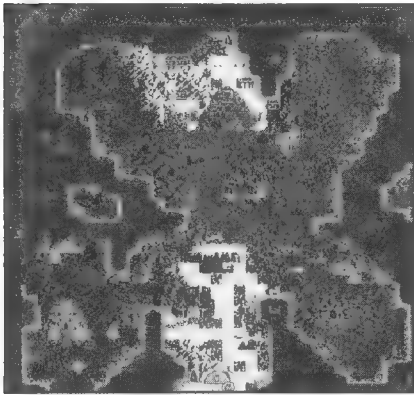
2 Players

Normal Difficulty

This scenario's map is full of rough terrain. Skills such as Pathfinding definitely will come in handy. You can choose to play as either Yellow, beginning in the west, or Blue, beginning in the east. Each has two castles and one hero at the start. Both sides are fairly equal, so choose either. A lot of territory lies between you and your opponent, so don't worry about garrisoning your castles for a while. Instead, hire two or three heroes at each castle and send them out to explore and gather resources. Avoid fighting creatures while your armies are weak. You can build a strong army at each castle to deal with these obstacles. Several towns lie scattered across the map, as well. Capture as many of these as you can, and upgrade each to castle.

Once you encounter your enemy, send your strongest armies toward the front to engage opposing armies (which are often on the weak side). When you begin invading enemy territory, I suggest defending in the north as you attack in the south. Advance to the opposite side of the map, and then wheel your forces around to the north for the final battles necessary for victory.

THE BACK DOOR



Small

4 Players

Easy Difficulty

This is a small, quick scenario, and you'll only need one hero. Don't build your town into a second castle; it uses too many resources, and you can replace these only by expensive trading at a Marketplace. Spend the first week exploring and building troop structures in your castle.

There are plenty of guardian creatures on this small map. The good news is they block the other players from attacking you. Use your first week's creatures to attack the weakest of the three northern peninsulas and collect its goodies. There's no rush: The longer you wait, the more guardian creatures the other players will destroy.

After producing creatures for three weeks, head toward the portal you liberated in the northern peninsula and use it to attack one of the players. When you succeed, go back and collect the new creatures built in the interim and move on to the next player.

VALLEY OF DEATH



Medium

3 Players

Normal Difficulty

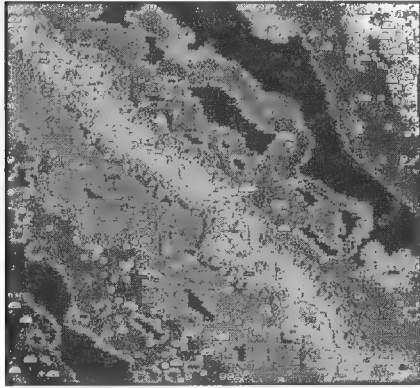
You start in the lower-right corner of the map, with a nice mix of mines and resources. Don't worry about enemy attacks, because powerful guardians protect your kingdom's entrances. Also, game designers were very generous with the time limit in this scenario. Six months is more than enough time to capture the castle of Vulcania.

While you develop your castle, send two heroes out to explore. They find treasure, mines, and buildings (monsters guard them all). Once you have the troops, use one hero to explore while another systematically works through the valley defeating the guardian monsters. Capture and develop into castles the two towns in your portion of the map.

Eventually you reach the shore, where boats are available. Exploring the seas yields three traveler's tents and a portal in the upper-right corner. The portal and the three tents provide different means for entering the map's central valley—the Valley of Death. It's your choice (but the green barrier provides the quickest route).

Vulcania is in the lower-left corner of the map. A host of nasty monsters wait inside, so attack first with a sacrificial hero so you can gauge their numbers before committing your main force.

WITCH HUNT



Large

6 Players

Normal Difficulty

This scenario's objective is to defeat the Necromancer Wilgatus and capture his castle in the southwest corner of the map. This enemy is the Orange player. You can choose to play as one of five colors. Blue and Purple begin in the northeast; Green, northeast of center; Red, south of center; and Yellow, along the southern border in the center. I strongly recommend Yellow. Although all colors begin with a castle, Yellow also starts with two towns, and is closest to Wilgatus's castle.

Send your first hero to gather goodies around your castle, and hire another to take the boat to the seas and pick up floating items and treasures. Secure the Lighthouse to increase your waterborne movement, and go through the Whirlpool to another sea and continue gathering. As soon as possible, upgrade your towns into castles and hire heroes to gather resources in their localities. Don't worry about the other players. Concentrate on building one very strong army, and then send it to the volcanic island in the southwest to slay Wilgatus.



CHAPTER

9

Expansion Campaign Scenarios

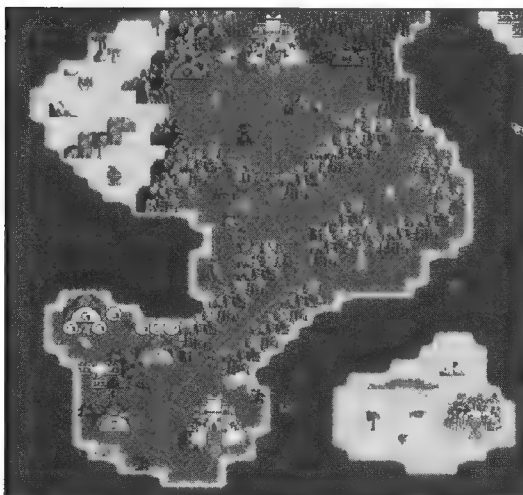
The expansion set includes four new campaigns of varying lengths. Two contain four scenarios, and two have eight scenarios. Each campaign has a slightly different "feel." One may have you sailing in every scenario; another may stress time limits. If you've played through all the missions in the original version, you'll be happily surprised with these innovative new campaigns.

THE VOYAGE HOME

This campaign is pleasantly varied. Two maps require a good deal of seamanship. The concluding scenario takes place on land. You must consider carefully how you use your resources: Something's always in short supply. Consider using marketplaces to make up the shortfall, and remember that the more marketplaces you control the lower the prices. Overall this is a good campaign for a beginner to start with.

Scenario 1: Stranded

Bonus: 500 Gold, Basic Scouting, or Nomad Boots (Recommended)



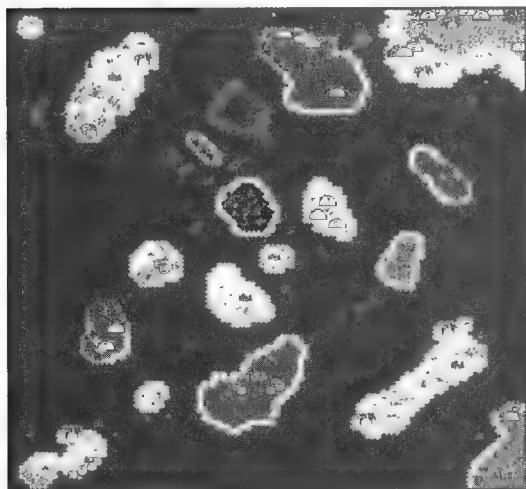
This first scenario in the campaign is quite short and not very difficult. You begin on a beach in the map's north-west. Immediately grab the treasure at the campfire and head east to the Rocs. Battle these giant birds to open the pass to the valley beyond. Once you're in the valley, visit the fountain for luck in battle, and then head to the fort west of the

castle, where your hero receives training in defensive tactics. Your next target is the castle, South Mill. You should be able to take it with few casualties.

As you build up your castle, move your hero around the valley to explore and gather free resources. When reinforcements arrive at the castle, add them to your army and then attack all the creatures guarding the remaining resources. When you've cleared out the northern part of the map, attack the Nomads and gather the goodies from the map's center. In the east, you find a brown Traveler's Tent. There you learn the password you need to get through the brown barrier.

Pass through the barrier and gather all the treasure to the east, then work your way south. Before attacking the Ogres, build up your army preparatory to an assault on the Orange player. Ignore the Orange armies and head straight for Chanler Castle. Capture it, reinforce your army from its inhabitants, and wait for the armies to attack, or until a week passes and the armies disappear. If the Orange player moves toward your castle at South Mill, build a Captain's Quarters to help defend it.

Now that you control the entire island, build a ship, load your hero and army aboard, and sail to the map's northeastern corner, where you find a shore filled with treasure. Gather it and head back to your castles to build up a very strong army before capturing the island's final town (in the southeast corner). Defeat the defending Red army, and proceed, victorious, to the next scenario.



Scenario 2: Pirate Isles

**Bonus: Basic Pathfinding,
15 Sulfur, or Basic Navigation
(Recommended)**

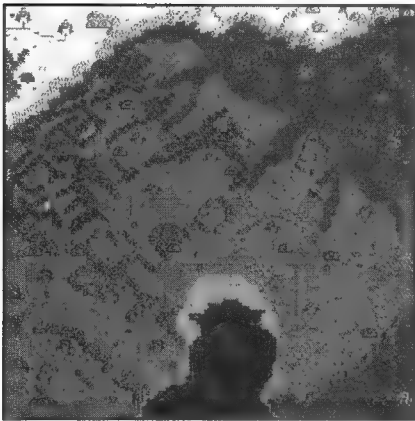
This map comprises several small islands in a large body of water. You begin in the southwest corner. The castle at Pirate Cove, your objective, is in the northeast. On your first turn, construct a castle at Waystop. As you build structures, explore the island, then board your ship and sail northeast to the island with

the Lighthouse. Controlling it allows your ships to move farther per turn. Next, head east to Brown Island. There you find resources, especially sulfur. Don't try to engage creatures or capture towns until you get reinforcements. Continue going around to all the islands, grabbing as many resources as possible.

In the next part of this strategy, you have two choices: Either return to your home castle at Waystop and enlarge your army, or hire another hero,

build another ship, and have the hero bring your reinforcements to you. Once you have an army with some strength, capture as many towns as you can to increase your gold revenue and the number of creatures you can recruit. On an island in the northwest corner you'll find a shipwrecked sailor who rewards you for rescuing him. The sailors stranded in the open sea will reward you for picking them up, as well.

Instead of spending a lot of gold and other resources to get Dragons, build up your army with hordes of lesser creatures; then head for Pirate's Cove. You can ignore the island's other castles and Blue armies. You need not capture or defeat them to win the scenario. In assaulting Pirate's Cove, you achieve your objective. Proceed to the next scenario.



Scenario 3: For King and Country

Bonus: Basic Archery, 3000 Gold, or Attack Skill +1 (Recommended)

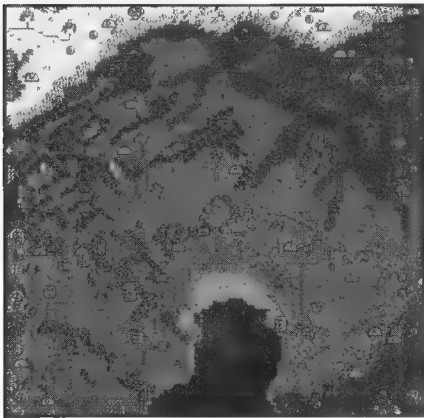
You begin with two heroes, a castle, and two towns under your control. Wood is a very precious commodity in this scenario, so use it wisely. Build up the citadel, upgrading the Archery Range but not the Blacksmith, Armory, or Jousting Arena.

Your Cavalry can be upgraded at the Stables and your Pikemen and Swordsmen at the Freedman's Foundry. Choose one of your heroes, strengthen his army, and send him to defeat the creatures guarding access to the resources in the southwest. Using just one hero vastly increases his experience so you can concentrate your units in his army. Use the other hero to gather resources and shuttle new soldiers to the fighting hero's army.

After clearing at least one pass leading to your towns, hire another hero and move him or her back and forth between the Windmills and Water Wheel to gather additional resources each week. You can also use this hero to

go to the market near Dragadune to trade these other resources for wood. When you have enough of this precious commodity, build a castle at one of your towns and then build the structures necessary to train troops.

Once you've cleared the southwestern area, head east to the area north of the bay and gather more resources. When your fighting hero's army is fairly strong, with at least 150 non-Peasant soldiers, invade Orange territory in the southeast. Capture the towns you come across, but don't waste resources building them into castles unless you really need the extra troops. Continue using your other heroes to shuttle troops to your main fighting army. After defeating Orange, head northeast to conquer Green, and then, finally, northwest, where Yellow resides. When you control all towns and castles, victory is yours.



Scenario 4: Blood is Thicker

**Bonus: Basic Necromancy, 2000 Gold, or
Basic Logistics (Recommended)**

This scenario uses the same map as Scenario 3; this time, however, you begin in the northeast. This scenario is also easier than Scenario 3. Two Barbarian leaders aid your cause, offering their castles for you to use. One is located in the northwest, and the other in the southeast. Hire a hero at

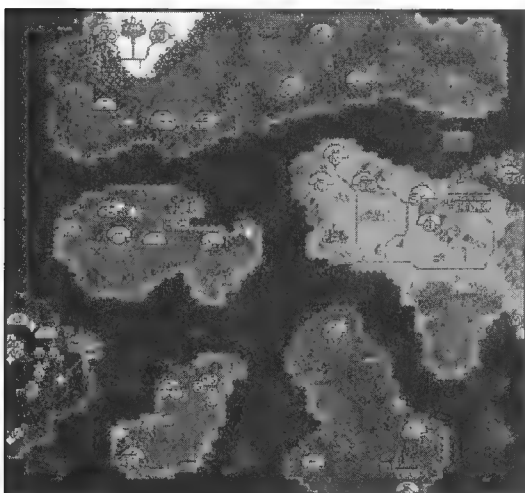
Frozen Peak, preferably a Barbarian, and build up his army so you can capture the lumber mill south of the castle, as well as a nearby castle named Alamar. With your Knight and his Necromancer sister, clear the northeast of resources and capture the towns south and west of Spirit City.

Send a hero from the northwest castle toward the center of the map to capture two more lumber mills, so you won't run short on wood. Sulfur is the limited resource for you in this scenario. Hire more heroes at each of your castles and send them out to gather resources weekly at Windmills and Water Wheels.

Before the game progresses much, you run into the Red player. Red's base lies in the center of the map. When you have a strong army, advance on Red territory. Then build up at least two armies with lots of troops and begin your invasion of Blue territory in the southwest. Blue has some very strong armies, but usually is weak on magic. Use your evil spells to good effect. If all of your troops are undead, use Death Ripple to attack all the enemy's troops with one cast. When you've captured all the map's towns and castles, you're the victor.

WIZARD'S ISLE

Although this mission has fewer scenarios than the two that follow, it's composed of longer, and individually more difficult, missions than the eight-scenario campaigns. The designers use a lot of water here, so expect to embark and debark from boats a lot. The Summon Ship spell is helpful for rescuing stranded heroes, but you must use it near the ship's location. As the title suggests, Wizards and their castles occur in most of the initial scenarios. This is a plus: Wizard castles are among the game's best. A number of transport portals and barriers direct your movement in the campaign, as well. (The final scenario has **eight barriers!**)



Scenario 1: The Shrouded Isles

Bonus: 2000 Gold, Stealth Shield of Protection, or Power Axe of Dominion (Recommended)

The island you start on has a neutral town on its northern tip and is rich with scattered resources. After conquering the town, send a secondary hero to explore the map. A fisherman on a platform in the map's southwest corner gives the hero a map outlining

all the islands. Take care at sea, because enemy heroes will jump on their boats and attack if they think they can win. While one hero explores, have your superhero gather resources and clear your island of creatures.

In this scenario, computer players send their heroes on ships to raid and conquer other regions. Be prepared for invasions by keeping a solid garrison in each of your castles. The good news is that the computer players spend considerable energy raiding each other rather than you.

When you're ready to expand, head east and conquer the island controlled by the Green player. It's full of resources and has only one castle. (For a map of this size, there are surprisingly few castles.) It also has a jewel mine you'll need to construct the cloud castle.

After you defeat the Green player, the Red, Orange, and Yellow players all become equally tempting targets. Red has only one castle, on the coast. The Orange player is fairly aggressive and will likely have the most castles. Defeating Orange assures your ultimate victory. Finally, Yellow presides over an area rich with mines. All these players are fairly weak and you should have little difficulty defeating them.

The Purple player is the map's heavyweight. To reach the Purple kingdom, get a hero to the aqua Traveler's Tent in the northeast corner of the map, and your superhero to the portal in the southwest corner. Expect to face at least 20 Bone Dragons and Titans.



Scenario 2: The Eternal Scrolls

Bonus: Mage's Ring, Fireblast, or Foremost Scroll of Knowledge (Recommended)

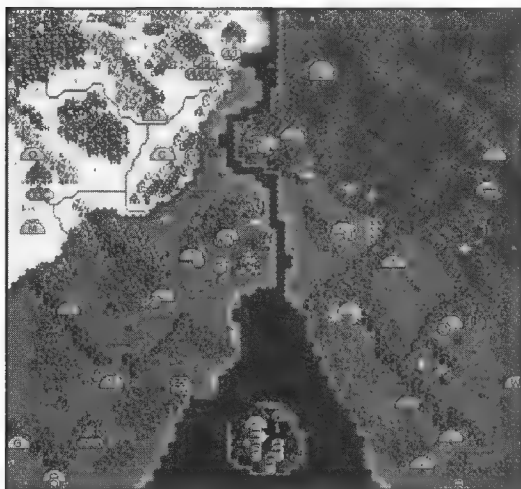
The peninsula you begin on holds only your castle, a town, and a well-defended Yellow castle at the other end from your starting point. The map's only gold mine lies in the northeast

corner. You won't reach it until the scenario is almost over, so gold will be in short supply throughout the mission. Consider taking some of the treasure chests as gold rather than experience. The good news is that all three peninsula communities are Wizard types. You can build up a large force of Wizard units quickly.

You receive a curious message about freeing a fellow Wizard named Joseph from captivity. The Jail lies near the Arena but an aqua barrier blocks access. The aqua Traveler's Tent lies north of your first castle. When you release Joseph, switch your forces over to him and make him the superhero. He has a better starting level and more secondary skills.

You may be tempted to go through the blue portal near the Arena and the Water Wheel. Don't do it until you're ready. You'll probably lack the power to beat the heroes you meet at the other end until after you conquer your own peninsula.

After defeating the Green and Yellow players, build a boat in the easternmost Green castle, Blackfang. This is the only way to get to the Red kingdom, because boats can't navigate the straits near Chronos castle. The Red player has the scenario's strongest forces, so be ready to fight Black Dragons. You needn't conquer the Red kingdom; just get the password from the red Traveler's Tent. Then send your superhero through the red barrier into Chronos, site of the Great Library.



Scenario 3: Power's End

Bonus: Mass Haste, Summon Earth Elemental, or Chain Lightning (Recommended)

The east side of the map, where you start, features weak guardian creatures and only one opponent. This opponent, Orange, has three castles—one to the north, one to the west, and one to the south. These castles

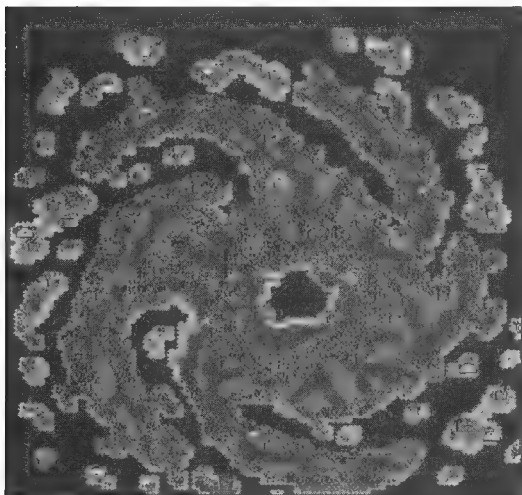
and the Orange heroes offer little military resistance. However, the heroes exploit the map's layout, which offers several routes to any destination. As your superhero marches toward an Orange castle, the opposing heroes will circle behind you down an adjacent valley. Try to build up a secondary hero that can conquer guardian creatures and fend off these heroes. Also, remember to visit each of the continent's four Obelisks. They provide sections of a map that leads to the Orb of Negation.

Once you control the west side of the map, build a ship in the northern Orange castle of Whiteshield and follow the river downstream. You've conquered half the map, but you've barely begun. The eastern half is loaded with treasure, resources, and very tough creatures. You must fight groups of Level 6 creatures numbering more than 100. I recommend at least 25 Titans and 75 Phoenixes before trying some of these stacks.

As you sail down the river, the first landing area to the east leads to plenty of goodies, including enough treasure chests to give you a 10,000+ boost to your experience! Next, head for the black island in the middle of the bay. You'll find the last Obelisk there, along with another horde of resources. Finally, sail back to the eastern continent and land on the southern beach. When you leave the beach, don't attack the Genies. Instead, use the difficult-to-see path through the forest to go around them. This path comes out where the Leprechauns sleep.

Conquering the castles on this east side is a breeze compared to its heroes and guardian creatures. If you can beat 80 Dragons, will 10 Minotaurs scare you? However, you needn't take every castle or explore every inch of the map to finish. Remember, your goal is to find the Orb of Negation, not to conquer everything in sight. Also, you need use only the purple and red barriers. The others are false paths leading to more groups of powerful creatures. In fact, fighting all the east half's deadly monsters could reduce your force so badly that exploring fully might kill your superhero.

The completed puzzle map indicates where to dig for the Orb (near the red castle in the north called Greywind) and finish the scenario.



Scenario 4: Fount of Wizardry

Bonus: 5 Wood, 5 Ore, or 1000 Gold
(Recommended)

You begin on a small island in the north-east section of this large map. The town there can't be upgraded, but it does provide you with Halflings, Boars, and Iron Golems. First, explore the surrounding seas while the town builds up forces sufficient to defeat your enemies. When you have that

force, head to the island with the town called New Dawn, south of your starting position. Defeat the 20 or so Wolves guarding the island and capture the town. It's upgradable into a Wizard's castle.

Your next problem is finding boats, so more than one hero can explore at once. Sail south until you find the brown Traveler's Tent in the middle of the southern bay. Its password gives you access to the portal next to New Dawn, leading to a town that has a Shipyard. Simply build heroes in your castle and send them through the portal to pick up a boat.

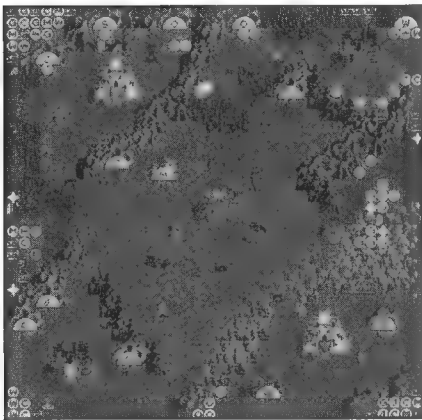
When you explore the islands you'll find them rich in resources, artifacts, treasure, and buildings that enhance your primary skills. The resources are important, as there are only four mines in the whole map! Further, the central island has no resources or creatures guarding paths. This last is a welcome break from the previous scenario.

You'll find the Orange and Green players among the islands. Both are fairly small, with only three castles. After you conquer them and discover all the islands, go to the beach on the south side of the central island (reachable from the map's west side). Notice how the central island is laid out with five spiraling arms. At the end of each arm is a Traveler's Tent with a password for one of five barriers preventing you from reaching the center of the island.

When you reach the island's central lake, visit the two Traveler's Tents along its shore. To cross the lake to the last Red castle, you'll need the Level 5 spell Dimension Door, available from the Knight's Mage Guild. Remember, your hero must have an Expert Wisdom rating in order to use this fifth-level spell.

DESCENDANTS

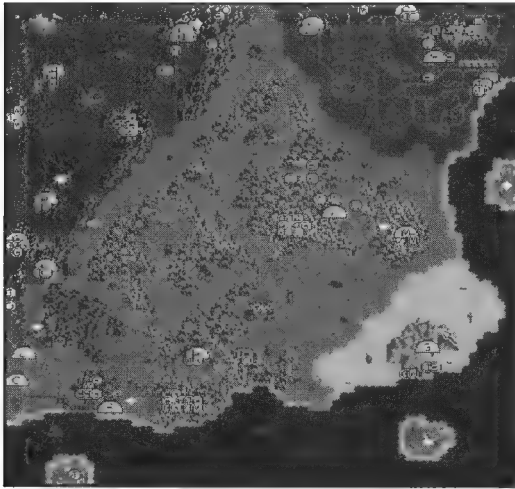
This campaign has a lot of interesting scenarios. Time limits pose frequent challenges, made more difficult by the many battles you must fight. Lose one major battle and you may not have time to recover before time runs out. Save the game and scout out your opponents before committing your main forces. And use secondary heroes to run errands and explore: The time you save is worth their occasional loss.



Scenario 1: Conquer and Unify

**Bonus: 50 Wood, 10 Crystal, or 1000 Gold
(Recommended)**

This is a quick scenario on a small map. Take the gold, because you won't need the other choices. Send your hero to gather nearby resources. As he does, build and upgrade all creature structures at your castle, except for the Pyramid. This game is too short to make this worthwhile. Instead, load up on all other troop types and head for the goodies stashed on the west edge of the center region. Hire another hero to shuttle reinforcements to you. Capture the town in the center of the map. As you march around the map, be sure to attack any enemy armies that approach. If you concentrate your forces in one army, you should have no trouble defeating them. Capture the three opposing castles to unify the area under your leadership.



Scenario 2: Border Towns

Bonus: Defense Skill +1, 1000 Gold, or Attack Skill +1 (Recommended)

You begin in the map's southwest corner. You lose all three of your border towns on the first turn, so waste no resources defending them. Instead, build up your castle at Stronghold, as well as your army. Send your hero to gather resources while this goes on. When your army has enough

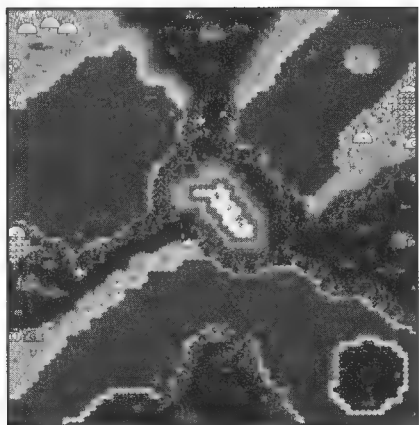
troops to battle the Green player, send your hero east to the castle at Weed Patch. Hire other heroes to shuttle troops from Stronghold to your main army, and to visit all the weekly resource places, such as Windmills and the many magic gardens near Weed Patch.

Rebuild your strength and then head to the castle in the northwest, at Roc Haven. Northwest of this is a city of Dragons. This structure isn't worth the effort and casualties required to capture it, so avoid it. Continue advancing toward Avalon castle, and then, finally, to Trilobar, to achieve your goal of repelling the invasion.

Scenario 3: The Wayward Son

Bonus: Steelskin, Mage's Ring, or Basic Logistics (Recommended)

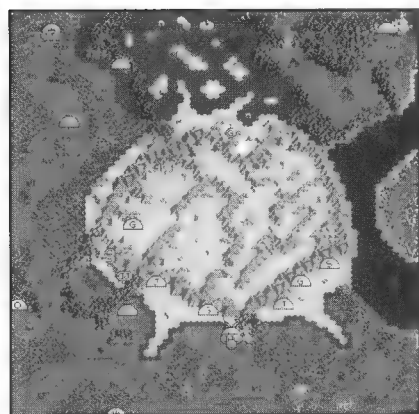
This scenario has a time limit: You must find Joseph within eight weeks. First, move your heroes west and then north, to the town of Obsidian. You can't build a castle there, but you must capture it to get reinforcements for your armies. Once you receive a few more troops, head to the portal at the southeastern edge of this peninsula, while the hero with the Summon Ship moves



to the western shore. The heroes going to the portal transport to an island in the east, where they find treasure and two ships. Sail one hero to the north-central map area to capture the lighthouse as the others head to the northwestern shore. Land here, and make your way north to the town of Lavalor. Designate one of your heroes "fighter," and transfer all the troops you can to this hero. Capture Lavalor and reinforce your army again.

You're unable to upgrade any of this map's towns to castle. Make your way to the map's east edge to find another town—Vaultius. Clear the map's entire eastern side and return to its center before heading north again. In the north you find the town of Dragontooth. Capture it and start recruiting Dragons for your army.

While this goes on, send your fighting hero west to gather a few more resources. When your army is very strong, summon a ship to the body of water in the northeast, load your main hero aboard and sail for the island containing the town of Island Home. Defeat its Titan defenders, and find Joseph here—as well as victory.



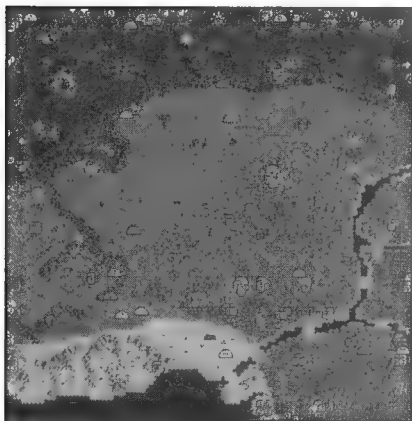
Scenario 4: Crazy Uncle Ivan

Bonus: Basic Scouting, Power Axe, or Basic Logistics (Recommended)

This scenario, too, has a time limit—four months. You begin in the map's southwest corner. Head northeast and capture the town of Borderlands. Construct a castle. As you build structures to increase your army, clear the southern part of the map of all available resources.

When you have a strong army, begin the next phase of your search by heading north along the western side of the map until you reach the town of Gorgomar. Capture it, and then move east along the map's northern part. Remember to use additional heroes to shuttle troops to your fighting hero and to visit weekly resource centers. In the northeast you find the town of Gungtooth. Capture this town and build a castle as well as a Shipyard. Build a boat and sail first to the southwestern shore and then to the portal near the map's southern edge.

The portal takes you to the island in the east. Move your hero north to the other portal that transports you to the desert in the middle of the map. Travel west until you reach the town of Ivan Home. Here you find your crazy uncle who will help you save your kingdom.



Scenario 5: The Southern War

Bonus: Basic Luck, Spiked Shield, or Basic Leadership (Recommended)

Begin this large scenario by building up your castle and your army. Then head east to capture the castle at Flint. Next, move west and capture the towns of Woodville and Blacksford, thus securing the northwest. Next, head to the center of the map to secure the border towns of Brownston and Avone. This completes this scenario's first phase. Strengthen your armies and begin the invasion of the jungle kingdom.

Head southwest from Brownston and enter the jungle along one of the streams. Your first goal is to capture the three towns in the southwest—Pig's Eye, Roscomon, and Elk's Head. Finally, head into the last phase of the scenario: Move your forces east and take over the remaining six towns or castles.



Scenario 6: Ivory Gates

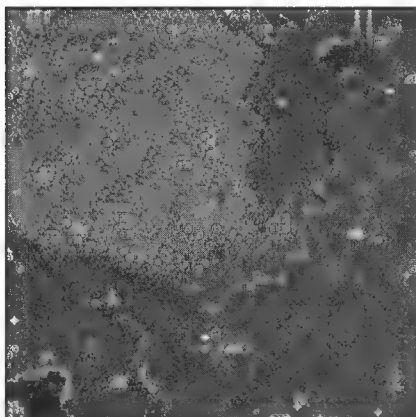
Bonus: -1000 Gold, -1000 Wood, or -2 Mercury (Recommended)

The map comprises three zones. You begin in the green zone in the southeast corner. The brown zone is a strip covering the middle of the map from the southwest to the northeast. The final zone, white, covers the entire northwest section of the map. The key to success in this scenario is to take one zone at a time. Clear the green zone first. It's full of resources

just waiting for your heroes to pick them up. Capture the castle at Westfork, just west of your castle, as soon as possible.

Once the green section is cleared, invade the brown section. It contains a castle in the center and a town at each end. Take the castle in the center first, and then go for the towns after dealing with the Red player.

With the brown section secured and all resources gathered, strengthen your army for invading the white section. It contains two castles in the northwest and two towns—one in the northeast and the other in the southwest. Take the two towns first, and then converge your forces on the two castles (located near one another). There are no tricks, just lots of bloody fighting.



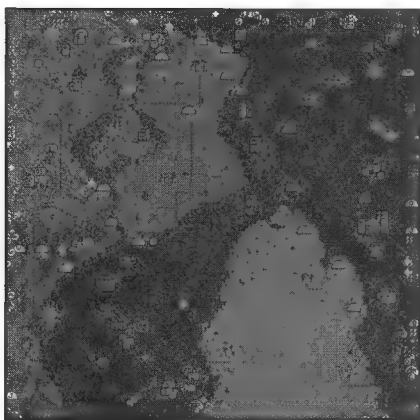
Scenario 7: The Elven Lands

Bonus: 1000 Gold, Basic Scouting, or 20 Wood (Recommended)

To win, you must retrieve the Elves' Golden Bow within six months. Dragons captured the bow, which is now in the map's northwest corner. Four quadrants make up this map. You begin in the

southwest quadrant, and control the only town here, so just gather all the resources and artifacts scattered about. Be sure to visit the island in the southwest corner to get the password at the Traveler's Tent. There are many magical barriers, so write down the passwords you get so you won't forget them during gameplay (especially if you play the scenario over more than one session).

After clearing the first quadrant, head to the swamp quadrant in the southeast. Capture the town there. Once this quadrant is clear, head to the northeastern one, capture another town, and gather resources. Now you're ready to enter the final quadrant—the green one in the northwest. Its many barriers make this a maze-like area. Use two or three heroes, at least, to cover all the ground in the least amount of time. You also find three towns right next to each other. Capture them and then gather all your troops into one large army to take on the Dragons guarding the Golden Bow.



Scenario 8: The Epic Battle

Bonus: Basic Leadership, Basic Archery, or Spell Power +1 (Recommended)

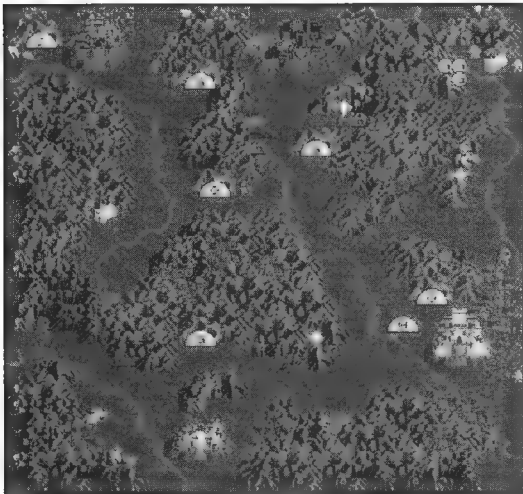
This is a massive battle, so choose the bonus that best fits your fighting style. You begin with two castles and a town located along the map's western edge. The Red player has two castles and two towns located in the central part of the map. The Green player has two castles and one town along the eastern border. Four neutral towns are located in the south, between Red and Green territories.

Your first priority is to gather all the resources in your territory while strengthening your armies. Attack any enemy army that invades your area unless they appear too powerful. Once your area is secure, invade Red territory. Again, there are no tricks or secrets for winning in this scenario, just lots of bloody battles.

After defeating Red, regroup and prepare for the final assault on Green. Grab the neutral towns as you do this. Even if you don't use them for troops, they add gold to your coffers and deny it to the enemy. By the time you fight the Green armies, they're fairly strong. Use weaker heroes and armies to scout the areas in advance of your main battle forces. If you take your time and are careful to choose only battles you're sure to win, you'll emerge victorious from this scenario.

THE PRICE OF LOYALTY

"The Price of Loyalty" has a bit of everything in it. Two of the missions have unique goals, and several require a bit of seamanship. Portals and barriers are present, but not overwhelmingly so, as in the "Wizard's Isle" campaign. There are some large maps and a couple of small ones. If you have time for only one campaign, this is the one to play.



Scenario 1: Uprising

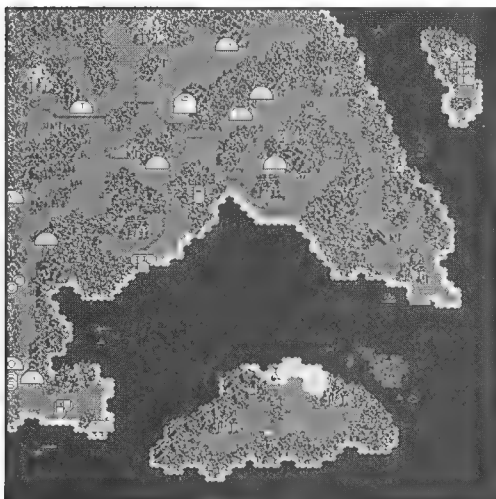
Bonus: Minor Scroll, Medal of Valor, or Stealth Shield of Protection (Recommended)

This scenario is small and quick, with only four castles (including your own). After building up your troops for a week, head east and take the Sword artifact. Continue east, capture the Orange castle, and defeat the Orange player. By this time either the Red player or the Blue player will have eliminated the other and will start march-

ing your way. Build a secondary hero and give him all your troops to block the enemy marching toward your castle. Meanwhile, have the superhero clean up the mines and resources in Orange territory and your own lands.

More importantly, have the superhero visit all the sites that give experience or improve the hero's primary skills.

Build up your strength and explore the unoccupied valley on the map's eastern edge. When you're strong enough, transfer all your troops to the superhero and march against the first enemy castle. You should have little trouble sweeping the map of opponents by this point.



Scenario 2: Island of Chaos

Bonus: 2000 Gold, Ballista of Quickness, or White Pearl (Recommended)

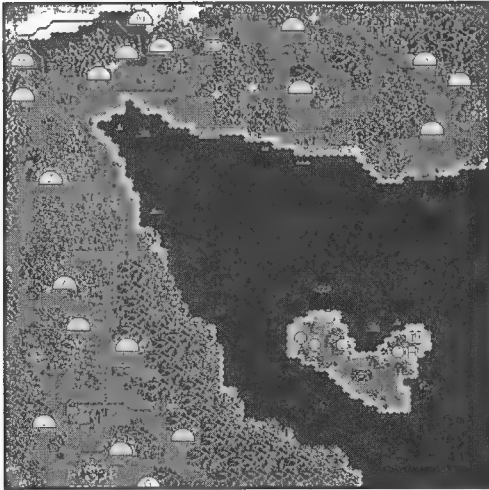
First, clear the area around your castle of guardians and resources. Save the Pikemen in the corner for last, as they're the strongest. Don't worry about attacks from other players; you start far from anyone else. When you've cleared the area around the castle, march north. Take the Alchemist's Lab you find

halfway up the map: You'll want its mercury to build the Red Tower and, consequently, produce Phoenixes.

Beyond the Alchemist's Lab several paths meet, and you can't block every route. From here on you must watch for Red heroes slipping behind you to retake castles and mines. When you do take a castle, garrison it strongly before you leave. If your superhero is stronger than a Red hero, they often run away as you draw near. Use this technique—and strong garrisons—to maintain your hold on the captured Red castles.

It's a long walk back to your home castle, so designate several heroes to ferry reinforcements to your superhero. With Phoenix troops filling out your

army, your superhero becomes unstoppable. After you defeat the Red player, go to Black Vein castle and build a boat. Sail it to the island in the center of the map and conquer the two Yellow castles. They've been building throughout the game, so their forces will be bigger than any you've seen so far. Consistent Phoenix production should make for an easy victory here, however.



Scenario 3: Arrow's Flight

Bonus: Mage's Ring of Power, Advanced Logistics, or Major Scroll of Knowledge (Recommended)

As in the previous scenario, you needn't worry about enemy attacks. so build a secondary hero and have both heroes gather resources, visit sites, and kill guardian creatures. However, be wary of the Ogre Lords guarding the fort. They're very powerful, and

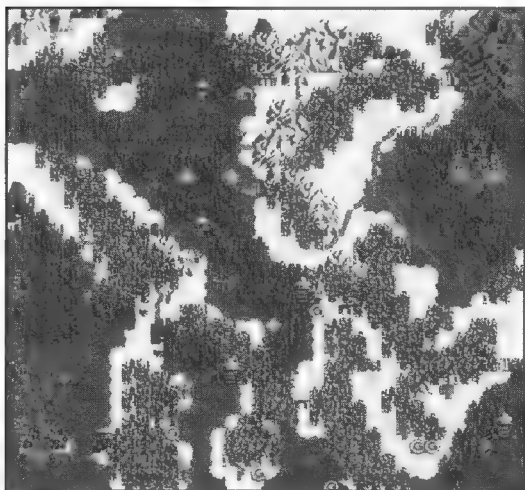
there are more than 30 of them. After two weeks' unit production, send your superhero north and capture the neutral town halfway up the map.

Your first opponent is the Red Knight in the northwest corner. There's not much finesse to defeating the Red player. Move your large force (which should include some Titans) into the snowy wastes, and attack. If you're lucky you can fight the hero outside the castle. After taking the castle, move east and capture the Red town. When you've defeated Red, visit all sites and claim all mines in former Red territory. Don't worry about the Green player attacking: A barrier blocks access to the Green kingdom.

When you're ready, and loaded with Titans, use the green password on the barrier. (The green Traveler's Tent—where you get the password—lies in the center of the northern edge of the map.) In the Green kingdom be wary

of heroes slipping around you and striking toward your rear. If the opposition isn't too strong, have the heroes bringing reinforcements from your home castle place them in the conquered Green town. That way they defend the town and stay nearby.

The Green kingdom has only two castles and one town, so it shouldn't take long to defeat Green once you enter their kingdom.



Scenario 4: The Abyss

Bonus: Medal of Honor, Castor's Bracelet of Magic, or Defender's Helm of Protection (Recommended)

This is a favorite scenario of the campaign. It has an interesting objective and a time limit: You must conquer the only castle on the map by the seventh day of the third week. Your Sorceress begins near a town you can't improve, and initially there's no other source of troops. Even after adding the town's garrison to your own forces, your army is pitifully small.

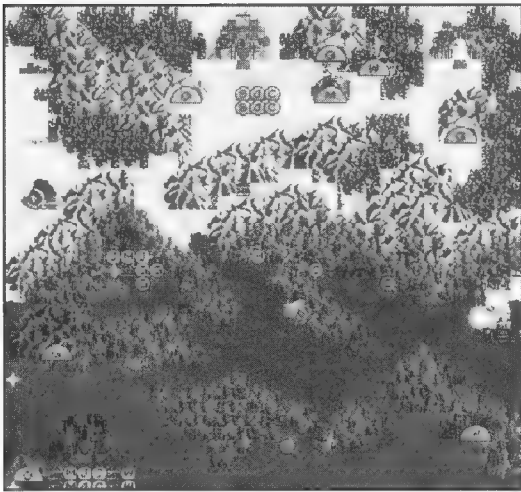
Three routes to the castle divide the map—the Way of Might, the Way of Magic, and the Way of Numbers. In all three cases you must march along paths that creatures block constantly. Basically, the scenario is a series of tactical battles. You must husband your forces as closely as you can. Any major losses, especially the Phoenix, doom your effort.

Each route promotes a different means of winning the castle. The Way of Might is laden with weapons, shields, and structures to increase your attack and defense skills. The Way of Magic provides spells and artifacts to improve your sorcerous abilities. The Lightning spell comes in very handy at the end.

Last, the Way of Numbers is strewn with sprite-filled trees and three air-summoning altars.

If you get the chance, select Diplomacy as a secondary skill. It may let you sway a group of creatures to your side. You won't get to build new units (except in the Way of Numbers), so these additions can be crucial. Remember, though: You must lose or dismiss a unit to create space for new recruits.

By the way, if you wait a turn between removing the red barrier and attacking the castle, the leader escapes. This isn't good. The troops the hero escapes with leaves space in the castle for Bone Dragons. It's your choice: Which would you rather fight?



Scenario 5: The Giant's Pass

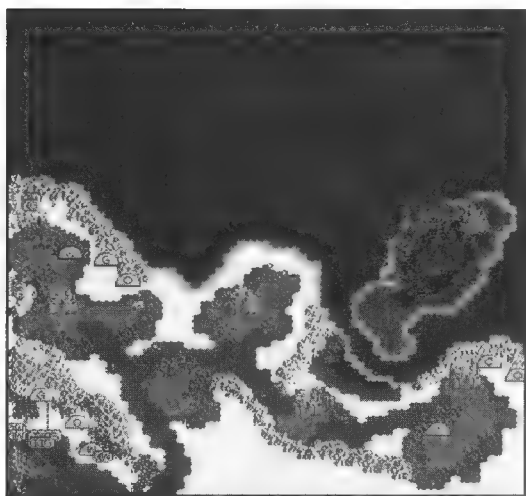
Bonus: 2000 Gold, Disrupting Ray, or Power Axe (Recommended)

This is a small, quick scenario. The map contains only three castles and is halved by mountain range. You're the only player south of the mountains, so take advantage of this and sweep up all mines and resources. This level is full of artifacts that increase your Defensive bonus, so stress military power over magic.

Your castle starts with almost nothing. Build structures that produce units first, while your heroes are out looking around. Also take advantage of the several structures in the area that build good units for you. The ruins give you Medusas and the air-summoning altar provides Air Elementals for 500 Gold each. The little Archer houses don't add much individually each week, but the two together can increase your Archer output by 50 percent. Finally, all

the treasure lying around could be turned into experience, but gold is recommended. In the beginning there's no combat with the Red player, and the extra units you can purchase with the gold give you an advantage against the guardian creatures.

When you're ready, take the pass through the mountains to the north. Send a secondary hero west to clean up the isolated valley there. This done, send a fast secondary hero, such as a Barbarian, to raid the northern lands. They have two gold mines to your one, so a little economic warfare is in order. If you're lucky, one of their heroes chases your Barbarian into your superhero's clutches. When your army is large enough, take the Red castle in the center, and then the second Red castle to the east, to win the scenario.



Scenario 6: Aurora Borealis

**Bonus: 2000 Gold, 3 Crusaders, or
Traveler's Boots (Recommended)**

Your mission in this scenario is different. You need only capture the Green castle, which is well-defended. Unfortunately, the castle is on an island opposite the lava fields in the Red kingdom. To get to the island you must get the artifact that contains the Dimension Door spell. You'll find

this scroll on the northwestern tip of the continent you're on. Finally, the Red player is far more powerful than you, and, if you take too much time, will conquer you.

First, recruit a magical hero. You need someone to perform the Dimension Door spell and conquer the Green castle. For this reason, make him or her your superhero, rather than the Knight you begin with. Gather the resources and mines around your castle, but don't bother with areas near

the Red kingdom. Send a fast Barbarian hero for the Dimension scroll and return it to your superhero. Then have the superhero teleport over the mountains into the Red kingdom. (There's a good chance a Red hero will catch anyone attempting to walk around the mountain range.) After crossing the mountain range, race for the coast and use the spell to teleport to the island. Refill your magical reserves at the well and head toward the Green castle. The nearby graveyard contains an artifact, but you must fight Zombies to get it. The Green castle itself has several Bone Dragons and 10 to 20 Liches, so come ready for a fight.



Scenario 7: Betrayal's End

Bonus: 10 Sulfur, Animate Dead, or
Power Axe (Recommended)

The town you must take before time runs out lies northeast of your starting position. Don't worry about defensive measures, though, as the castle is unlikely to be attacked. If the Blue player does send someone your way, you have plenty of time to prepare a welcoming committee. In fact,

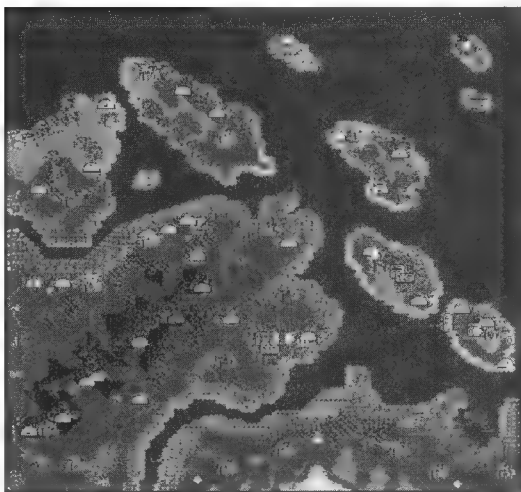
you're on the offensive most of the time in this scenario.

Rivers divide this large map into four sections. The middle sections have only one castle each, so you'll have little difficulty conquering these areas. Another piece of good news is that there's only one route to each of these two castles. This makes it difficult for the enemy to slip behind you. March your superhero north toward the Blue castle. All forks in the road lead to dead-end valleys with mines or other goodies. Have secondary heroes explore these. After you take the Blue castle, march south and capture the Red castle.

The aqua Traveler's Tent behind the Blue Knight's castle provides the password to the portal next to your castle. It transports the hero to the middle of the third section (and the Red opponent). This comes in handy, as it allows your superhero to return to his castle and add new spells. Of course, it also decreases the travel time for reinforcements to reach your superhero.

The rest of the mission consists of defeating the three Green castles and gathering passwords to several more barriers. The blue Traveler's Tent lies on the northern tip of the Red kingdom. When you pass through the blue barrier, defeat the two Green castles, which are almost side by side. Then head north along the river and capture the last Green castle. Continue north, where the gold Traveler's Tent waits along the banks of the river, near the map's top edge. Return to the lake near the first two Green castles: You'll find the gold barrier on the east side.

Getting to the red Traveler's Tent appears easy, but it's not. Look closely. Bone Dragons lurk behind trees on the path to the red Traveler's Tent. Furthermore, the Hydras and Medusas standing guard occur in unusually large numbers. The upshot is, you must send your superhero after them, not a secondary hero. The red password finally admits you to Lord Kraeger's keep, and victory.



Scenario 8: Corruption's Heart

Bonus: 5 Magi, Advanced Estates, or
View Heroes (Recommended)

If you've dreamed of a scenario with huge numbers of the most dangerous monsters, this is it. You begin on an island, with one boat. Explore the seas, landing on islands with resources and artifacts. In the northern ocean area are three small islands; one has

the blue Traveler's Tent. The seas present a problem, however—the Green player's propensity for sailing and landing on your undefended islands. You must island-hop and conquer the Green kingdom while leaving a strong garrison in each of your castles. When you get a chance, send a secondary hero down the river that divides the continent. The hero will find untold riches floating in the water at the far end of the river.

You can't reach the two other opponents (Yellow and Red) by conventional means. They both have large, isolated kingdoms you can enter only via portals. By the time you reach them, expect to face armies that include hundreds of creatures. Prepare for this by using your two Necromancer castles and three Wizard castles to create large armies with many high-level creatures. Bone Dragons and Titans are a must. You should have no fewer than 50 Titans or 75 Bone Dragons in your superhero's army before daring the Yellow kingdom. If you can, bring two heroes, each with their own Level 6 creature.

To get to the Red kingdom, you must first reach the red Traveler's Tent in the southwest corner of the Yellow kingdom. A hero, with 45 Black Dragons and 15 Titans, stands guard: Someone does **not** want to be found. The red barrier lies on the Red kingdom's northern shore. There you'll find heroes who routinely have 50 to 100+ Bone Dragons, so stay on your toes.



A P P E N D I X

Cheat Codes

There aren't many cheat codes for **Heroes of Might and Magic II**, but those that exist are extremely powerful. Before presenting the codes, we'll give you our standard disclaimer: Don't use 'em unless you really have to! For a while it's fun to play around with them, using them to do such things as win the game automatically—but after awhile they get pretty stale. So do yourself a favor and take it easy with the codes.

These codes should be typed in during normal play, while you're looking at the Adventure screen. Use the keys on the main part of your keyboard, **not** on the numeric keypad.

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 911 | You instantly win the scenario. Congratulations!!! |
| 1313 | You automatically lose the scenario. Hey, don't ask us why you'd use this one! |
| 8675309 | Uncovers the map. Works best if you sing the '80s tune as you type in the code. |

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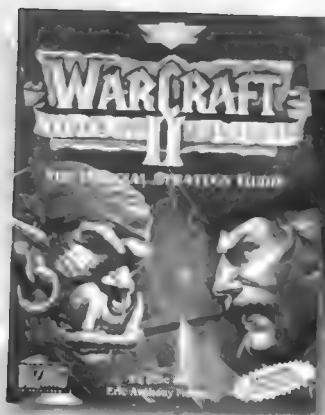
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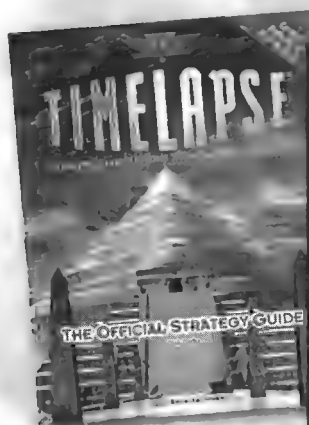
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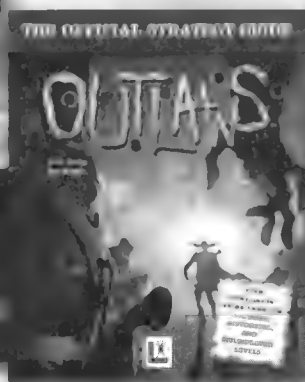
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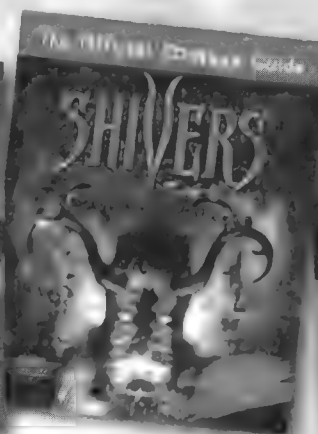
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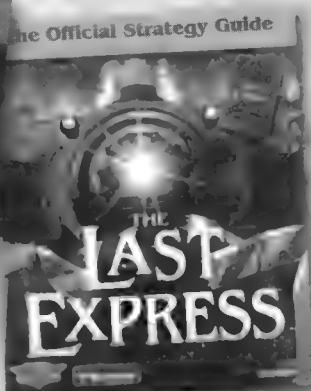
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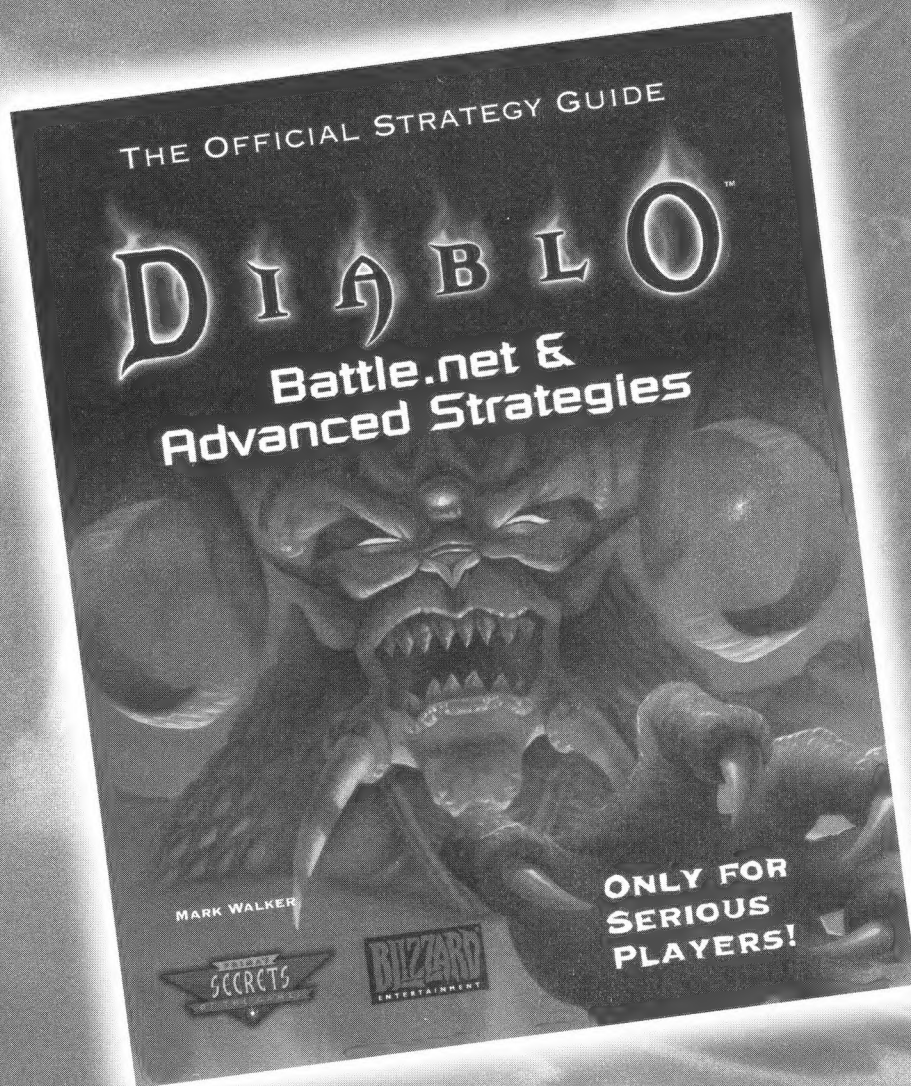
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